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# Disce Mori:

# LEARN TO DIE.

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BY

CHRISTOPHER SUTTON, D.D.

REPRINTED FROM THE FIRST EDITION, OF 1600;

WITH A

MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THE
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE;
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LONDON.

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# MEMOIR

OF

# CHRISTOPHER SUTTON, D.D.

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The learned, eloquent, and pious Author of the following treatise, Christopher Sutton, is said to have been a "Hampshire man born." Of his parentage and his earliest years no information seems to have been preserved to our day, except that the register of his matriculation in the University of Oxford records his lowly origin.[1] The date of his birth must be fixed somewhere about the eighth year of Queen Elizabeth, 1565; he having entered a "batteler or commoner of Hart Hall, in 1582, at the age of seventeen." The time of his matriculation, and of his residence in the University, naturally suggests many points of inquiry, both as to his instructors and his companions. But such inquiries, it is presumed, could now end only in conjecture. Still we must not overlook the fact, that Sutton had begun his academical life before Richard

[1] "Aul. Cerv. Martii 1, 1582, Christopherus Sutton, Hamptonensis, plebei filius. An. 17." Reg. Matr. P. This date would correspond with March 1, 1583, according to our present mode of reckoning.

Hooker[2] "was drawn from the tranquillity of his college; from that garden of piety, of pleasure, of peace, and a sweet conversation, into the thorny wilderness of a busy world." Undoubtedly it cannot be fairly thence inferred that the young scholar had then an opportunity of profiting by Hooker's preaching, and conversation, and example; though one might be unwilling to conclude that any individual was altogether shut out from the benefits which Hooker's residence in Oxford diffused among his contemporaries. But when we find these two men so closely coinciding in their sentiments on spiritual and ecclesiastical subjects, we may at least suppose that Sutton was not unknown in after days to Hooker; whilst doubtless that master in our Israel had been, by his works at least, a guide and instructor to this younger brother in divine things; as he was indeed, and still is, to the Church at large.

Christopher Sutton very shortly changed Hart Hall for Lincoln College, as a member of which he proceeded to his degrees in arts and divinity, having become B.A. Oct. 12, 1586; M.A. June 18, 1589; B.D. May 25, 1598; and D.D. June 30, 1608.

How long he remained in Oxford, preparing himself for the better discharge of his sacred duties as a minister of the Church, we

[2] Isaac Walton's Life of Hooker.

are not told: but the opinion that he was prematurely ordained, and was presented to a pastoral charge as incumbent, before the legal age, seems to have originated altogether in mistake.[3] The first preferment to which he is

[3] Anthony à Wood, in his biographical notices of Sutton (unless it be an error of the press), has unquestionably antedated his presentation to Rainham by ten years. Subsequent writers have followed that author with too implicit a reliance on his accuracy. Hence appears to have arisen the error of considering Sutton to have been both "ordained and presented to Rainham before he was twenty-three;" and of supposing him "to have held the rectory of Woodrising," subsequently to his resignation of Rainham, and his enjoyment of Caston. Had the facts been so, a question would naturally have suggested itself as to the state of church-discipline in the times of Queen Elizabeth; for certainly the admission of a clerk to a benefice before he was twenty-three years of age, had been prohibited by statute some years before, 13 Eliz. c. 12. 1571. But, besides that the mistake involves such an inconsistency in this case, we are here strongly reminded, that no one can be too cautious in trusting implicitly to any author, especially in deducing inferences from assumed dates, without first verifying the facts on the best evidence. Often does an apparently slight and unimportant error lead imperceptibly to a totally perverted view of things, unconnected with the immediate subject of inquiry.

The statute of Elizabeth enacts that "No person shall hereafter be admitted to any benefice, with cure, except he be then of the age of twenty-three; and that none shall be made minister, or admitted to preach and administer the sacrament, under the age of twenty-four years." The ambiguity of the word "minister," in this statute, has been often the subject of remark.

known to have been advanced was the[4] rectory of Woodrising, in Norfolk, in the year 1591, when he was twenty-six years of age. His early and steady friends and patrons were the members of the ancient family of Southwell, especially that Sir Robert Southwell, of whose calm and happy death he speaks so feelingly in the Preface to his Disce Mori. Robert was the son of Sir Thomas Southwell, by Mary, daughter of Sir Rice Mansell, of Glamorganshire; and, as Rear-admiral, was present at the famous engagement with the Spanish fleet, in 1588. He married the Lady Elizabeth, daughter of Charles Lord Howard of Effingham, afterwards Earl of Nottingham, and Lord High Admiral of England. Sir Robert died Oct. 12, 1599, leaving his widow with three daughters and an infant son, Thomas, then about five months old. She subsequently married the Earl of Carrick.

To this "honourable and virtuous, his very good lady, who, as he was fully persuaded, truly reverenced God and served him, whom

[4] Parkin says, that in 1603 Christopher Sutton made a return, that in Woodrising there were then forty communicants. This seems to be too large a proportion, unless the circumstances of the place have very much changed. At the last census the whole population of Woodrising did not exceed 127.—*Parkin's Norfolk*, vol. x. pp. 277. 280.

to serve is blessed liberty, yea, is the most honourable estate of all." Sutton dedicated his treatise, Disce Mori, at its earliest publication in 1600, during the first year of her widowhood, and also his later work, Disce Vivere. It does not appear to have been elsewhere noticed, that "the two virtuous and modest gentlewomen[5], the now Lady Verney and the Lady Rodney, sisters, sometime attending upon the late Queen in her honourable privy chamber," to whom Dr. Sutton subsequently dedicated his "Godly Meditations on the most Holy Sacrament," were the two youngest daughters of his patron and patroness, Sir Robert and Lady Elizabeth Southwell; Catherine, who married Sir Greville Verney, of Warwickshire; and Frances, who married Sir Edward Rodney, of Somersetshire.

Nor must it be unnoticed, that the name of their eldest daughter, Elizabeth, does not appear in that dedication. The lamentable circumstances of her alliance with Sir Robert

[5] In the edition of 1613 (in black letter) the Dedication is "To the two virtuous, modest gentlewomen, M^ris^ Katherine and M^ris^ Frances Southwell, sisters, attending upon the Queen's Majesty, in her honourable privy chamber." This Queen was Anne, wife of James the First, who died March 2, 1619. Hence, in the editions subsequent to her death, the ladies are said to have been "sometime attending upon the late Queen."

Dudley[6], forbade so right-minded a Christian as Sutton to include her, though the most spendidly connected of them all, in the same dedication with her two "right virtuous and modest sisters." It was pain and grief to him, when he witnessed so unhappy a stain, blighting one of the fairest branches of a family, towards which he was ever forward to profess his gratitude and affection; and when earnestly calling upon his fellow Christians to "prepare themselves dutifully to receive their

[6] This Sir Robert Dudley was the son of the celebrated Earl of Leicester, the favourite of Queen Elizabeth, by Lady Douglas Howard. He had married Alice, daughter of Sir Thomas Leigh, of Stoneleigh, by whom he had five children. Failing to establish his legitimacy, he could not succeed to the estates and honours of his father, and leaving his native country in disgust, he settled in the Grand Duke of Tuscany's dominions. His learning and endowments procured him the patronage of the Emperor Ferdinand, who created him duke of the empire. Before he left England he had separated himself from his wife Alice, alleging, on a disgraceful pretence, that his marriage with her was originally void. When he went abroad he took with him Elizabeth Southwell, whom he afterwards married, having obtained a dispensation from the Pope. She is represented to have been a very beautiful and accomplished person. Alice Leigh, who survived him, was always acknowledged in England to be his lawful wife; and Charles the Second created her Duchess Dudley in her own right. Her residence, which adjoined the church-yard of St. Giles in the Fields, she gave to the rector of that parish for ever.

Saviour in a state of grace, that they might be received by Him into the state of glory," he would make mention only of those who persevered in adorning the doctrine of the Gospel in all things. Elizabeth Southwell had become a duchess of the empire, but she had forgotten her religious duties and devotion to God, "without which," in Sutton's own words, "all the dignity of the world is worth nothing."

The Dedication itself reflects honour upon our author's integrity and gratitude, bears his testimony to the worth of a family who were high in favour with queen Elizabeth, and abounds with pious sentiments. Its first sentences will not be thought out of place here. —"That desire you have, Right virtuous, to serve God in holiness of life, and very towardly disposition even from your tender years, so applicable to all goodness, (wherein may you wax old by the grace of God,) have often moved me to beseech Him who hath begun this good work in you, to continue the same even to an aged and happy end. For surely our religious duties and respective devotion to God is worth all the world's dignity besides: nay, without this, all the dignity of the world is nothing worth."

In 1597, June 6, his patron, Sir Robert Southwell, presented Sutton to the vicarage of Rainham, in Essex, which however he

retained only one year, resigning it on his presentation (Aug. 14, 1598) to Caston, in Norfolk[7]—the Caston which Anthony à Wood says was in Sutton's own country. This living[8] he held till the year 1618, when he was succeeded in it by John Sutton, probably Christopher's brother, mentioned in his will, and certainly the same person who was advanced by King James (during the minority of Thomas Southwell) to the rectory of Woodrising, which Sutton resigned in 1612, on his presentation to Much or Great Bromley, in Essex. This parish, called by Anthony à Wood Murley Bromley (as Newcourt[9] presumes, from the Morleys, formerly lords of a moiety of this manor), Sutton held from the 27th November, 1612, till his death. His successor's institution is dated August 5, 1629, on "the death of Christopher Sutton."

The difficulty which many have felt with regard to the name of this parish, as found in Anthony à Wood, is now seen to have origi-

[7] Anthony à Wood's expressions, which are somewhat vague, have led to another curious mistake here. He says that Sutton was a Hampshire man born, and that he was presented to Caston in his own country; which in the recent edition of his Meditations is rendered, "in his own county," and by Newcourt, "He became parson of Caston in Hampshire." There is no Caston in Hampshire.—*Newcourt*, vol. i. p. 927.

[8] Blomefield's Norfolk, vol. ii. p. 283.

[9] Newcourt's Dioc. Lond. vol. ii. p. 97.

nated purely in a mistake. That antiquary refers to Dr. Sutton's will, from a copy of which, or from the report of it by others, he evidently drew much of his information respecting Sutton's preferment. In the authenticated office copy in Doctors' Commons, the reading is still unquestionably Morley Bromley; but a careful collation of that copy with the original, in the testator's own handwriting (preserved there in fair condition), proves the word written by Sutton to have been Much Bromley; the transcriber having mistaken the final letters, which it must be confessed are not easy to be deciphered. The solution of the difficulty supplies us with another curious instance of the readiness with which men will transmit errors, and even countenance them by reasonings or conjecture, rather than be at any pains to ascertain the matter of fact. The same observation applies equally to the name of another of his livings, Rainham. In the office copy of his will it is spelt Roneham, and so it is still found in Anthony à Wood, and from him has been copied into a late edition of his Disce Mori: in the original it is Rhaynham.

The living of Cranworth-cum-Letton[1] he

[1] Parkin (whose original edition contains the mistake, which is too faithfully adhered to afterwards, though after all it probably arose merely by an error of the press in transposing the two final figures,) states that Christopher Sutton was presented to Cranworth by Thomas Southwell in 1632, three years after Sutton's death.

enjoyed not quite six years, having been instituted to it, as appears by the Norwich register, August 4, 1623.

Shortly after the accession of King James, that monarch having been exceedingly delighted by Sutton's "excellent and florid preaching," presented him to a stall in Westminster Abbey.[2] This prebend he retained to the day of his death.

Although Sutton was in his lifetime so celebrated a preacher, yet no specimen of his pulpit eloquence seems to have survived him.[3] Indeed, the only sermon of which we find any specific mention made, is the discourse which he delivered at the funeral of the famous antiquary Camden. And the expression employed with reference to this sermon would lead us perhaps to infer, that he did not, on that occasion, deliver an elaborately written composition, but rather that it was unprepared, and spoken on the spur of the occasion: "He stept up into the pulpit, and made a true, grave, and modest commemoration of his life."

This expression is found in Anthony à Wood's own report of Dr. Sutton's sermon;

[2] This prebend had been held in commendam by Dr. Young, Bishop of Rochester; Sutton was installed in 1604.

[3] The Author of the posthumous volume of Sermons by Dr. Sutton, published in 1633, was not Christopher but Dr. Thomas Sutton, of St. Mary-Overie.

and the entire passage is in itself interesting. "At length our author Camden paying his last debt to nature, at his house at Chiselhurst, in Kent, on Sunday, the 9th of November, 1623, his body afterwards was conveyed to Westminster, to the house there, where he used to dwell; where lying in state for some time, it was, on the 19th day of the same month, carried to St. Peter's, commonly called the Abbey Church, within that city, accompanied by several of the heralds in their formalities, many of the nobility, clergy, gentry, and others; all which being placed, Dr. Christopher Sutton, a prebendary of that church, stept up into the pulpit, and made a true, grave, and modest commemoration of his life; adding, that as he (Camden) was not factious in his religion, so neither was he wavering or inconstant; of which he gave good testimonies at his end, professing in the exordium of his last will that he died as he had lived, in the faith, communion, and fellowship of the Church of England."[4]

Scanty as these materials confessedly are, it is believed that no additional particulars relating to Dr. Sutton can now be recovered. Indeed, for the purposes of this Memoir, the records, as well of Lincoln College as of Westminster Abbey, were searched in vain.

[4] Wood. Athen. Oxon. Bliss. vol. ii. p. 348.

No information has been obtained which can either directly or by inference add to our knowledge of the circumstances of his life, his habits, his labours in the ministry, or his death.

His last will indeed leaves us in no doubt that when he died he left neither child nor widow behind him ; or rather it enables us, without much chance of error, to infer that he was never married. He wrote that will on Good Friday, April 3, 1629 : and although he there states himself to have been then in good health, he probably survived the execution of the document only a very short time. Little more than three months elapsed before his will was proved in the Prerogative Court at Canterbury.

This original document, (which has been recently examined, and which does not appear to have been hitherto made accessible to the admirers of his writings,) contains so explicit a declaration of his faith in the fundamental articles of Gospel truth, so breathes throughout the spirit of a modest, pious, and charitable mind, and affords so good a practical illustration of his own principles and advice[5] which he had published thirty years before, that it has been deemed desirable to insert it in this place entire.

[5] See Disce Mori, chapters xii. and xiii.

"In the year one thousand six hundred twentie nine, on the third day of April, being Good Friday. The last Will and Testament of me Christopher Sutton, Prebend of [the] Cathedral and Collegiate Church of St. Peter in Westminster, written with mine own hand, in manner and form following.

"In the name of God, Amen. I Christopher Sutton, Doctor in Divinity, and Prebend of the Cathedral and Collegiate Church of Westminster, most unworthy of that title and place, being at this present (I give Almighty God praise) of good health and memory, do make and ordain my last Will and Testament, in form and manner following: Imprimis, I commend in humble manner my both body and soul into the hands of [the] blessed Trinity: my poor sinful soul I commend into the hands of God the Father, who hath created it, into the hands of God the [Son] my merciful Redeemer, who hath redeemed it, into the hands of God the Holy Ghost [who hath] sanctified it, and after an unspeakable manner infused his graces into it, in prospering [me] in my study and calling, in preserving me, his unworthy servant, from innumerable evils whereinto, by the corruption of mine nature, I had often fallen. And for my earthly body, I bequeath [it] to Christian burial in the place where it shall

please God to call me out of this mortal life. If it be at Westminster, I humbly crave to be buried before the vestry door, where the choirmen keep their surplices, to whom I give the sum of five pounds. If it please God to call me in the country, I desire to be buried with divine service. If it happen there be a sermon, I request the preacher to speak little of praise, to whom I give twenty shillings. Item, I give to the parish of Raynham, in Essex, where I was sometimes vicar, the sum of six pounds, towards the building of a vicarage-house there. Item, I give the parish of Caston, where I was sometimes parson, a small tenement for some poor body to dwell in, whom the parson and churchwardens shall think have most need. Item, I give unto the poor of Wood Rising, where I was sometimes parson, fifty shillings. Item, I give to the poor of Much Bromley, in Essex, where I am now parson, fifty shillings. Item, I give unto the poor of Cranworth, where I am now parson, fifty shillings. All which legacies I will to be paid within one year after my decease. Item, my will is, that all my books, wheresoever, be kept in store for my brother John Sutton his children, if please God any of them prove scholars; they to have them amongst [them]. Item, I give to John Sutton his eldest son, after his father's decease, the land I have in mortgage from

Reynold Maroin, of Much Bentley in Essex. Item, I give to Elizabeth Sutton, my brother's daughter, a small tenement in Much Bromley in Essex. To Thomas Sutton the tenement taken up in his name in Little Bentley; both these tenements, after their father's decease. Item, I give unto Christopher Sutton and Peter Sutton twenty pounds a-piece, to be paid at the age of one and twenty years. Item, I give unto my sister Stempe one gold ring, and one other to my sister Poalwheele. Item, I give unto William Garname, my late servant, twenty pounds. Item, I give to Frances Woodson, my now servant, ten pounds. Item, I give amongst my good friend Mr. Ireland's children, the sum of ten pounds. The rest of my lands, goods, cattle [chattels], whatsoever, I give to my brother John Sutton, whom I make sole executor of this my last will and testament, binding [him] to pay all my debts, and see these legacies performed, within one year after my decease. Last of all, I make Mr. Ireland, of Westminster, and William Sarvaham, servant to his Majesty, overseers of this my last will and testament, made the year and day above written, per me

"CHRISTOPHER SUTTON."

The above will was proved, and administration given to his brother, John Sutton, 27th July, 1629.

When Christopher Sutton was born, the horrors of Queen Mary's persecutions were fresh in the memory of many of his still surviving contemporaries, and he lived to the fifth year of Charles the First, when the horizon had already been blackened with many signs of the storm which was then soon to gather and close in on every side; and which was destined, under the correcting hand of Providence, to sweep away for a season our most sacred institutions, temporal and spiritual, in one desolating flood. But though he may thus appear to have lived in a sort of breathing-time between the two conflicts, by which popery and fanaticism, each in its turn, persecuted the faithful members of our Church; and thus to have been spared those fiery trials, on the one hand, to which his predecessors had been exposed; and to have escaped, on the other, the struggle which his immediate successors were called to endure in their devoted attachment to our apostolic communion; yet the years of his ministry required, and gave ample room for, the full exercise of zeal and decision, of firmness and charity combined.

The perplexities and distracted state of the Church, upon which our Author, in the "Preface to the Godly Reader," prefixed to his "DISCE MORI," very powerfully and feelingly touches, called for all the energies of her wisest and most faithful sons, both lay

and clerical, to prevent for a time, under God's blessing, those awful calamities which not long after poured down upon her in all their fury. The biographer of Richard Hooker supplies an awful, but a most true comment, on those passages in Sutton's preface, which speak of "troublesome dispositions," "turbulent humours and private fancies," "plausible pretences of reformation," "cursed scoffing, sour austerities," "tossing the testimonies of ancient record to and fro, wresting the very text of holy writ," "men who take occasion to bring into obloquy our Christian cause," "no blessing of God acknowledged," "men bearing the name of Christians living like Pagans and infidels, and saying in their hearts, 'There is no God.'"

Isaac Walton, in describing those "oppositions, and anxieties, and troubles, that deprived Richard Hooker of the virtuous quietness which he desired, and the blessed tranquillity for which he prayed and laboured," draws a very interesting, though a very painful picture, of the state of those times. "The active Romanists on the one side, and the Nonconformists on the other," he represents as having become "fearless and restless in the prosecution of their designs and dangerous plots against the Church and State. Many there were in this number possessed of a high degree of spiritual wickedness, an innate rest-

lessness, pride and malice, a complacency in working and beholding confusion,—men whom a furious zeal and prejudice had blinded, and made incapable of hearing reason, or adhering to the ways of peace—men, whom pride and self-conceit had made to overvalue their own wisdom, and become pertinacious, disputing against those men whom they ought to have reverenced, and those laws which they ought to have obeyed. To heighten all these discontents and dangers, there was also sprung up a generation of godless men—men that had so often and so proudly opposed the blessed motions of the Blessed Spirit, and the inward lights of their own consciences, that they had thereby sinned themselves into a belief of what they would be glad to believe, but were not able to believe, that there is no God; and so finding in themselves nothing but what was worse than nothing, they began to wish what they were not able to hope for—that they should be like the beasts that perish, — and in a wicked company, which is the Atheist's sanctuary, were so bold as to say so."

It was in the midst of this "extremity of fear and danger," that Christopher Sutton lived: and it was to call his countrymen (as far as in him lay) from these miserable perversions of their nature, and to raise their minds to high and heavenly things, that he

preached and wrote. Were we to draw any inference as to the circumstances of the original publication of his works, from the great difficulty now found in procuring early copies of them, we should conclude that they could have passed only through one or two editions, and those of very limited impressions. On the contrary, we learn from Anthony à Wood, that both his treatises, Disce Vivere, and Disce Mori, were returned to the press several times, and that of his "Godly Meditations on the most Holy Sacrament," the thirteenth edition was published in 1677.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the seasonableness of the re-publication of such works as Sutton's admirable treatises, Disce Mori and Disce Vivere, at the present time; since it must be obvious to every one who merely glances at the state of things now surrounding us. Indeed, it would perhaps be difficult to mark out a single period from the days of the author, when the signs of the times would seem to render the spreading abroad of his pious and wise sentiments more opportune than now. Vast changes, doubtless, have been wrought, as well among the other nations of the world as in our own native land, since Christopher Sutton (with other men of pious and prudent minds, and of unshaken constancy) was raised up to do good in that time of need in which they lived. But the

Church is still the same, and is still surrounded by dangers. Infidelity abounds, and threatens to make a still more open and wide demonstration of its malignity; the love of many who should be zealous in the cause of true religion, has waxed cold, whilst others have been carried away into all the extravagances of wild fanaticism. Human nature is the same in ourselves as it was in those who have gone before us, and we need the same calls to think seriously and soberly of Life and Death—to learn both to live, and to die. It is in the hope that these labours of a faithful son of the Church, himself an honoured man in his generation, may, under God's blessing, tend to cherish amongst us genuine feelings of piety, sound views of the Christian's duty in life, and the Christian's hope in death, together with a right apprehension generally of Divine truth, that after a lapse of nearly two centuries and a half from their first appearance in the world, they are now re-published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

J. Endell Tyler.

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,
*March* 30, 1839.

# Disce Mori.

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# Learne to Die.

A Religious discourse, moouing euery Christian man to enter into a serious remembrance of his ende.

*Wherein also is contained the meane and manner of disposing himselfe to God, before, and at the time of his departure.*

In the whole, somewhat happily may be obserued, necessary to be thought upon, while we are aliue, and when we are dying, to aduise our selues, and others.

Put thy house in order, for thou shalt not liue, but die. *Esay* 38. 1.

LONDON
Printed by Iohn Wolfe.
1600.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

In this Edition, a copy of Dr. Sutton's "Disce Mori," as it was first published in black letter, in the year 1600, has been exclusively followed. Subsequently so many additions, (or, as perhaps they ought rather to be called, interpolations,) some decidedly objectionable, and others of a very questionable character, were introduced into the work, that it has been thought, upon the whole, best to adhere strictly to that form in which the Treatise was originally dedicated by the Author himself to Lady Elizabeth Southwell, then one of the ladies of Queen Elizabeth's household.

# EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

*To the Honourable and Virtuous, his very good Lady, the Lady Elizabeth Southwell, one of the Ladies of the Queen's Majesty's most honourable Privy Chamber.*

Lately entering, right virtuous Lady, into some more than ordinary consideration of the graceless attempts, and desperate enterprises, which many in these days, (and the more the more pity,) by a cowardly yielding to evil motions, commit, even against their own selves, yea, their own safety, I thought to discharge my duty unto Almighty God, and plain meaning to men, by setting down only some short advertisement, for discontented and distressed minds. But, after weighing with myself how much it concerneth every man to be careful of his end, (whereupon depends so great a charge, as his eternal welfare is worth,) I then began to draw that particular advertisement appertaining unto some, to a more general discourse, applicable unto all, and every one, in this form, Disce Mori, Learn to die: for

it seemed to me a thing most necessary, for every sober Christian to be moved to enter into a serious remembrance of his end; to know the mean and manner of disposing himself to God, before, and at the time of his departure: that so, by the assistance of God's good grace, he might live and die the life and death of the righteous; and that it might be said of him, which St. Ambrose sometimes spake of Abraham, "Abraham died in a good age." For why? Abraham persevered in his good resolutions in his old age, yea, even unto the end. Madam, I beseech the God of Abraham to grant you Abraham's good successive course, both in the way and at the end of the way. Your more than usual favour, and long continued acceptance, hath bound me unto you, whom otherwise I truly reverence, for that I am fully persuaded you truly reverence God, and serve Him, whom to serve is blessed liberty, yea, (as I shall in the discourse following show) is the most honourable estate of all. To make issue of my dutiful regard, this small occasion is offered. Were I a mere stranger, I could not, for protection sake, seek any better patroness of a religious discourse, than from a religious disposition: but your particular respect towards me many ways is such, as I shall live and die ungrateful. I could have wished to have made testimony of my willing intention by some other

means than by publishing under your Ladyship's name these small labours to the view of the world: for I must needs confess I was very loth (respecting my own weakness) to make that known unto others, which is best known unto myself: until at last, being over entreated by some special friends from the University of Oxford, whose sober, judicious, and very learned advice, I knew not how to gainsay, I was induced to let this present Tract go forward in the name of God. Wherein I seek not praise where none is deserved: but only desire the Christian Reader, where aught is amiss, to attribute that unto myself: and beseech your Ladyship, that if there be any thing observed, which may move so much as a good thought, that it would please you to give the glory only unto God, to whose heavenly protection commending you ever in my prayers, I cease for this time to hold you any longer from the matter itself, which followeth.

Your Ladyship's in humble duty,

CHRISTOPHER SUTTON.

THE

# PREFACE

TO THE

# GODLY READER.

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That religion is somewhat out of joint, when Christian conversation goes not even (as it ought) with Christian profession, is so apparent it cannot be denied; such and so sensible a defect, as that thereby the whole body is not a little blemished. Those whose hearts' desire is that Israel may be saved, and whose true charity is wont to beseech God for the good of all, have not only lifted up humble hands to heaven, but also endeavoured, by painful labours, to seek (as much as in them lieth, and so far forth as the times may permit and suffer) the best redress in this case they could: some by substantial answering, and soberly assuaging, the turbulent humours of those men, whose private fancies have much hindered higher proceedings in matters of faith; refuted they may be, and are, quieted they will not be. Others, by devout and

learned exhortations, in seeking to make a stay of those evils, which Atheism and want of the fear of God would in great likelihood bring upon this declining world: Both labouring for their times to keep some remembrance of Jesus Christ in the minds of men, before all be too far out of square, or come to unrecoverable ruin.

But here may we not demand of the diligent observers of our imperfections abroad, whose manner is so much to strike upon this one string, and by this defect take occasion to call in question, nay, to bring in open obloquy, our Christian cause, are none fallen at home from the ancient sincerity and harmless devotion of former and better ages of the Church? Some state-meddling actions, these uncharitable censures in clean shutting out from the household of faith, and hope of life, those who have poor souls to save as well as others, and bear as true a love to Christ crucified as themselves, may put them in mind, that we may all bear a part together in that song of mercy; "Cleanse us, O Lord." May we not all bethink ourselves on both sides, whether these be not the days whereof our Saviour Christ spake, "Wherein iniquity should abound?" Was ever that old complaint of Hilary more truly verified? "While there is strife in words, while there is question in innovations, while there is occasion in

doubts, while there is waywardness in consent, none is of Christ."[1] This nipping and galling one of, and at, another; this eager pursuit of the living, and troubling the very ashes of the dead (who cannot answer for themselves); is far from that "charity that hopeth all things;" and the counsel of that Spirit that bids us "pray one for another." To see what wit and learning is wont to do in tossing the testimonies of ancient record to and fro: nay, which is more, in wresting the very text of holy writ upon the tenters of our own dispositions, would so amaze him, that shall read over with advisement the controversies of these times, as he shall think some of them rather discourses to try mastery, than otherwise sincere travails employed for God's glory, and his Church's good. Now God of his mercy grant that once this froward crossing world may draw to a Christian harmony, that we may have less fighting and writing for religion, and more endeavouring on all parts to become, as we ought, more religious; that so this little ark of Christ's Church may now, in the cool of the evening, with a soft gale draw homeward, and with old Simeon embracing Christ, make ready to "depart in peace." It is the wise man's advice

[1] Dum in verbis pugna est, dum in novitatibus quæstio est, dum in ambiguis occasio est, dum in consensu difficultas est, jam nemo Christi est.—Hilarius ad Constant.

to every one, "Remember thy end, and let enmity pass." And thus much we beseech at their hands, in whose hardest judgment our cause is so feeble, that setting aside all private respects, they would at last consider whose gracious protection hath defended so long his, and our cause, whose loving and watchful eye hath preserved her[2], who is (and God grant long may be) the staff of our peace, calling to mind that of our Saviour, "If you will not believe me, yet believe me for my works' sake." For those busy spirits nearer home, who would needs govern before they have well learned to obey, and that at their first boarding must sit at the helm to guide all, how raw, how unskilful so-ever: but experience hath long time since taught the world, and the ruin of the East Church, how dangerous it is to sail in a ship, where the pilots are of a disposition to be quarreling within themselves: these men's new devices in matters of mere conceit have long seemed unto themselves better than all the wisdom of the world. But may we entreat them at the last to recount with themselves their own folly, in making it, as they have done, a perfection of godliness, to call and reckon others ungodly. And this cursed scoffing at Noah's nakedness, a sport to delight their sore austerities! would to God these strange-minded men would listen to the

[2] The author here refers to Queen Elizabeth.—Ed.

grave counsel of St. Chrysostom: "If with a desire of judging thou wouldest needs be a judge, I will show thee," saith he, (to wit) "the judgment-seat which shall be gainful unto thee, and no way touch thy conscience, —let thy mind and thought sit down to give sentence, call forth all thy offences, and begin to say with thyself, why hast thou done this or that?"[3] This private examining of our lives, would soon make these public controllers of all others, by plausible pretences of reformation, to look nearer home, and amend in themselves where much is amiss. St. Paul blamed their course whose "manner was to go from house to house."[4] Esau, that lost the blessing, was hunting abroad; but Jacob, that had the blessing and the inheritance too, kept at home.[5] "The wise man," saith Solomon, "is the first accuser of himself." And Judah spake humbly of an offender, when he said, "She is more righteous than I."[6] Let these men know that obedience is better than sacrifice, and that He who is wont to give "grace unto the humble," is also said "to resist the proud." Be they well assured, this slight stuff will shrink when it comes to the wetting. This counterfeit coin will prove dross, when it shall be put to the great trial. An easier matter is it for devisers to reprove

[3] Chrysostom in Hom. Matt. xliii. [4] 1 Tim. v. 13.
[5] Gen. xxvii. 30. [6] Gen. xxxviii. 36.

others than to mend themselves. Those who have a blemish in their eye, think the sky to be ever cloudy. Nothing is more common with troublesome dispositions, which have not known the way of peace, than to be contending, seldom contented, what cause so-ever there be otherwise to be thankful unto God. The Lord, by the prophet Malachi, saith, "I have blessed you:" the unthankful people replied, "Wherein hast thou blessed us?" If all be not answerable unto some men's conceits, all is amiss, no blessing of God acknowledged, no thankfulness at all remembered. To let these also go, with their childish proceedings, men are men, truth is truth: little need have we, did we bethink ourselves well, in this case to complain; worse we may fear, better to come we do not hope for: our rather wanting than enjoying, may make posterity to acknowledge our present good, in which case the religious and well-disposed may devoutly say, "O Lord, stablish the thing that thou hast wrought in us, for thy temple's sake and Jerusalem."[7]

A third sort there is, who, seeing the world divided into so many parts, care in effect for neither: of these kinds of men the Apostle could not but with weeping speak. And sure what more lamentable than that men, who bear the name of Christians, should live like Pagans and Infidels, and say in their

[7] Ps. lxviii. 28, 29.

hearts with the fool, "There is no God!" Is not that of the same prophet found true in these men's manners? "Man that is in honour may be compared unto the beasts that perish." "I think surely," saith St. Bernard, "if the beasts could speak they would call godless people beasts. The danger great, the peril imminent; no fear of God, no remembrance of the state present, or that to come! if ever it were needful, it is now needful, comparing what men are, with what they should be, to call this world to a remembrance of itself."[8]—"If I am a father," saith God, "where is my love? if I am a master, where is my fear?"[9] If there be a heaven, where is our care in directing our lives for the obtaining of the same? If there be any thing to do these men good, a remembrance of their mortality, and an applying themselves to learn to die, should somewhat avail. The handwriting once against Belshazzar caused his very heart to shake, and his knees to knock together. "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Peres."[1] The word *mene*, God hath numbered thy days; *tekel*, thou art weighed in the balance. If men take not heed in time, it may be written of every one whose days are in the numbering, and we may fear lest the hand write *Peres* too, which may make all to consider both what they are, and what they

[8] Bernard in Cant. [9] Mal. i. 6. [1] Dan. v. 25.

shall be. When we see others dead, we may consider we shall shortly do the like, and take part in the same lot that they have done before us. In the mean season, if death be an enemy[2], as it is, saith the Apostle, then let us watch it as an enemy, prevent it as an enemy, and so be able to endure the assaults thereof, when need requireth, and at the hour of our departure, rather rejoice than fear. Hereupon this present discourse of LEARNING TO DIE shall first lay before thee, good Christian reader, how necessary it is for every one to enter into a serious remembrance of his end: the manifold reasons that should move him to this remembrance. Amongst these reasons, specially the meditation of his state, and manifold afflictions incident unto the life present, should move him hereunto. Correction causeth the scholar more painfully to apply himself unto his lesson: and so the many chastisements in this world cause us the rather to be more industrious in this learning: the means that call us away from so good a labour are mentioned, and the manner how to avoid these means is withal expressed.

To make an entrance into this so solemn a subject, I was some time since occasioned by the treatable[3] visitation and most Christian

[2] 1 Cor. xv. 26.

[3] [Easy,—free from violent pain.]

end of that very worshipful knight, Sir Robert Southwell, whose approved service in this commonwealth, and good reputation in his country, is well known unto many; but of whose true heart to God ward, both in the time of his life, and at the time of his death, myself can truly relate before others. If there be (as without doubt there is) a duty which we owe unto the faithful departed, and a good remembrance to be had of those happy souls; then might I not omit a reverent mention of him whose portion I trust assuredly is with God. Look! what a mournful mind during the time of this his so Christian visitation, could at times consider of, and observe in private, I have been since by special motives drawn on to make that poor labour public, as a discourse proper unto the time. For although a consideration of our departure from this world be a subject not unfitting all ages; yet seeing we are fallen into those days wherein many live as if they should never die, and die, as if with death all were done, and when they come to depart this world, they are so far to seek in a right disposing themselves to God, as if they seldom or never entered into any earnest consideration of the same, necessary are those many treatises which tend to the amendment of life. But because upon our last conflict dependeth our eternal victory against the pro-

fessed enemy of our souls ; the well behaving ourselves in this combat must needs of all other be most necessary. To guide the ship along the seas, it is no doubt a good skill : but at the very entrance into the haven, then to avoid the dangerous rocks, and to cast anchor in a safe road, is the chiefest skill of all. To run the race in good order is the part of a stout champion ; but so to run towards the end of his race that he may obtain the crown, is the very perfection of all his pains. Than a good life what more Christianlike ; but after that passed, to die in the faith and fear of God, what more divine ? To order aright the upshot of our own time, and farewell from this world, what more behoveful if we respect ourselves ? but in these occasions to be also helpful unto others, what more charitable in respect of the communion of saints, and that common joy we receive in the good of all ? We are charged with letting[4] men live loosely, and most unchristianlike to depart this world, to lead their lives, and to go out of their lives, without order. What men do, is one thing ; what we wish were done, is another. God knows, and many can witness how often, how earnestly we call upon this careless world to remember that high and weighty business of the soul men have in hand. Though there be not in use "anoint-

[4] [Ed. 1600, "To let."]

ing with oil," which we find rather appropriate unto the former times of the Church, and nearest unto the Apostles themselves; yet we say with St. James, "Is any sick, let him send for the elders, and let them pray over him[5]:" and to this end is our Church form set down: An Order for the Visitation of the Sick, so entitled. We wish as heartily as any Christians can, that once the holy exercises of fasting and prayer were more devoutly put in practice than we see, and sorry to see they are not. We reverence antiquity, wherein, without all question, God was more carefully worshipped, memorable deeds of devotion and hospitality to his glory more cheerfully performed. What is consonant to faith and good manners we allow and commend, even in those who seem otherwise, in the opinion of many, so far different from us; and we heartily wish that men might see our good works, "and so glorify our Father which is in heaven." It is said of Aristides, who, perceiving the open scandal likely to arise, by reason of the contention sprung up betwixt him and Themistocles, to have besought Themistocles mildly, after this manner: "Sir, we both are no mean men in this commonwealth: our dissension will prove no small offence unto many. Good Themistocles, let

[5] James v. 14.

us be as one ; and if we will needs strive, let us strive who shall excel each other in virtue and love." The elements, though in qualities diverse, yet do they all accord for the constitution of the body natural. What should Christians but accord for the conservation of the Church, that they be not a shame to Israel ; which Church is a body mystical ? We are all sheep of that fold whereof Christ is the Shepherd : we are all stones of that building whereof He was the corner : we are all branches of that vine whereof He was the stock : we have but one God for our Father, that created us all ; one Christ Jesus to our Saviour, that redeemed us all ; one Holy Ghost to our Sanctifier, that doth adorn us all. We are but pilgrims and strangers ; and we shall one day find that a peaceable Christian life, with a good departure from this world, shall stand us more in stead than all the world besides, when after beating our brains in matters of contradiction, we shall perceive that this charitable Christian life is worth all. And therefore beseech we God, the author of all good gifts, that mercy and truth may meet together, that righteousness and peace may kiss each other, and his glory dwell in our land, until we come to dwell in the land of glory.

*A Copy of a Letter sent from Oxford to the Author of this book, and thought good in his absence to be set down by those to whom the public allowance hereof did appertain.*

"Master Sutton,

"I have perused your copy, which seemeth to me, in my simple opinion, very devout, divine, and learned. The subject of your book I greatly approve; for to teach to die well, is the forciblest persuasive to live well, which, alas, are, in these wicked times, both little thought on; for, indeed, men live as though they never made account to die; and they die as if they never thought on another life. Your several treatises are very Christian, and most necessary in this dying age, to all goodness: your phrase and vein of penning sweet and pathetical: your allusions divine and comfortable. I say at once, and I think, *Omnia in illo libro spiritum divinum olent.* All things in that book savour of a divine spirit. Wherefore my counsel unto you is, that you would make this your book live, by printing, which may make many live from sinning. God's good Spirit hath not moved you to take this good pains, now to bury the fruit so soon as it is born, and none profited; but that it should be presented unto the world,

to live when we are dead. *Felix et formosa proles est.* It is a happy and lovely offspring. Be not then so unnatural now, to stifle it in the cradle, or cast it, with Moses, to drowning: it is worthy the nursing and bringing up of a prince's daughter, and your honourable patroness. The Church looketh to have good service of it: the University, your college, your mother, your friends, expect credit and commendation by it: yourself, the father of it, will no doubt have great joy of it. Go forward, then, in God's name, and christen it to the world. And so I leave with my heartiest commendations, longing to see that fair printed which is now so near written I could scarce read it.

"From L. Coll. the 6th of August, 1600.

"Your assured loving friend,

"R. K."

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# Discē Morī.

## LEARN TO DIE.

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### CHAPTER I.

*An exhortation moving every one to apply himself to this lesson of learning to die.*

True it is, that our abode here in this world is an ordinance established of God, and may also be very acceptable to man. To procure the continuance of life by means ordained, is allowable. To avoid things hurtful to the preservation thereof, is behoveful. Wilfully to hinder our own health, is not only against the course of nature, but a way to tempt the very God of nature. To wish either to be gone sooner, or to stay longer in this earthly station, than it shall seem good unto Him, by whose appointment we all stand, is a part (saith one) of great ingratitude. The time, therefore, allotted us to walk in, we may accept, until God call us away, with thankful

hearts; using that space to serve Him in holiness and righteousness. To desire, with the prophet, that God who hath taught us from our youth up, would not leave us in age, when we are grey-headed[1], until we have showed his power unto them who are yet to come;—with Hezekias, to do God yet a little more service in the world[2];—with St. Paul, to be content to stay our dissolution, to be helpful unto others[3];—in which respects, we may accept of, and wish yet some farther continuance of ourselves and others. The true Israelites, in desiring so heartily the life and preservation of David their king[4]; because when he would be taken from them, the light of Israel should be quenched, and many a good Israelite should (as Jacob said) bring his grey hairs with sorrow unto the grave[5], did herein show no less dutiful than godly affection.

Notwithstanding, seeing that man hath here only a course to finish, which being finished he must away; seeing that (as the true saying hath it) Life is a Debt to Death, who hath absolute authority over all, then as the Prophet Daniel said, Hear acceptable counsel[6]; Nay hear, O man, counsel by the wisest amongst men, from the God of heaven: "Re-

[1] Ps. lxxi. 18.
[2] Isaiah xxxviii. 4.
[3] Phil. i. 24.
[4] 2 Sam. xxi. 17.
[5] Gen. xlii. 38.
[6] Dan. iv. 27.

member thy Creator in the days of thy youth, or, at the least, before the days come wherein thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them[7]," that is, thy approaching end. It is sufficient, saith St. Peter, "that we have spent the time past after the lusts of the Gentiles."[8] As if he should have said,—"For the time past—that is gone, and cannot be recalled. Now for God's sake, be careful for the time to come." That we are not born angels we know, and experience doth show we are all mortal. Live well and die well. If we take heed in time, we may live; and not to die, we cannot. Neither are we to regard how long we live, but how well we live.

To take, then, a religious remembrance of our end, as a potion next the heart in this miserable world, that begins apace to wear sickly in the doctrine of the resurrection, and goes forward so coldly in the exercises of Christian piety, will, with God's help, be a warm and special preservative to the soul. To LEARN TO DIE is a lesson worthy our best, and best-disposed attention, being a special preparative unto a happy end, wherein consisteth the welfare of all our being. David, who was for his learning a prophet, for his acceptation (saith the Scripture) "A man after God's own heart[9]," was then very studious in this learn-

[7] Eccles. xii. 1. [8] 1 Pet. iv. 3. [9] 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

ing, when after watching and fasting he besought God to be instructed concerning the number of his days, and the time he had yet to live[1]; like the careful scholar that breaks his sleep, forsakes his meat, is often in meditation, when he beats upon some serious subject.

Now, therefore, of all lessons or learnings, this learning to die!—what more weighty? what more divine? where is the scribe? where is the disputer[2]? what is it to have the force of Demosthenes? the persuasive art of Tully, so great an orator? what is it by arithmetical account, to divide the least fractions, and with the man of God never to think of numbering the days we have yet to live? what is it by geometry, to take the longitude of the most spacious prospects, and not to measure that which the prophet calleth only a span long? what is it to set the diapason in a musical concert, and for want of good government, to lead a life all out of tune? what is it with the astronomer, to observe the motion of the heavens, and to have his heart buried in the earth? with the naturalist, to search out the cause of many effects, and let pass a consideration of his own frailty? with the historian, to know what others have done, and to neglect the true knowledge of himself?

[1] Ps. xxxix. 5. [2] 1 Cor. i. 20.

with the lawyer, to prescribe many laws in particular, and not to remember the common law of nature, that all must die, which is a law general? In a word, what is it for the deepest worldlings to be able by reaching policy to compass plots of high enterprise, as doctors in that faculty, and die, (God knows,) like simple men? surely all is nothing worth. If thou art wise, be wise then unto thine own soul. As the rich man, saith Fulgentius, spoken of in the sixteenth of Luke, was poor in all his pomp, mourning in all his mirth[3], so are those who Live and never Learn to Die,—ignorant in all their knowledge. For why? the greatest Rabbins in these professions may come, with Nicodemus, to be catechized in this learning, wherein either as babes they have not received the first rudiments, or, as very truants, have a little by rote, and so soon forget all. Well! the perfection of our knowledge is to know God, and ourselves: ourselves we best know, when we acknowledge our mortal being. As men, we die naturally; as Christians, we die religiously. In the school of Christ, first, by mortifying the old man we endeavour to die to the world; and then by a virtuous disposing of ourselves for the day of our departure, we learn to die in the world. By our dying to

[3] Fulgent. Epist. ad Gal.

the world, Christ is said to come and[4] Live in us; and by our dying in the world, we are said to go to Live with Christ.[5] Now, therefore, seeing to die is so necessary, and to die well is so Christian-like, let every one apply himself soberly to this learning, as the greatest part of true wisdom. How many in the world beat their brains about frivolous matters; some being more busy to know where hell is, saith St. Chrysostom, than how to avoid the pains thereof[6]; others pleasing themselves, in pelting and needless questions, to seem singular amongst men. When they come to depart this world, then they perceive they have spun a fair thread, and wearied themselves in vain; then they consider how they should rather have applied themselves as they ought. Wherefore to grow more and more out of love and liking with these transitory delights, to break off by little and little from this wearisome world to his home-ward, disposing himself for the day of his departure, is a course most beseeming every wise Christian. Let the vain-glorious, who, with the chameleon, live by the air, and therefore is said to be ever found gaping; who have, with the moon, but a borrowed light in the world, not light in themselves, and therefore are still waxing and waning, follow shows and sha-

[4] Gal. ii. 20. [5] Phil. i 23. [6] Chrys. in Homil. 31.

dows, all which shall perish in the twinkling of an eye; but let the wise Christian man learn to die the death of the righteous, that so he may live joyfully here and hereafter. That which foolish men are willing to do in the end, wise men do in the beginning. Wisdom it is with Noah to build an ark while the season is calm[7]; with Joseph to lay up a store in the days of plenty[8]; while the weather is fair, to bethink ourselves of a tempest; in a word, when opportunity doth serve, to follow a thriving husbandry, sowing the seed of godly actions in the field of a repentant heart, that so at the autumn or end of our age, we may reap the fruits of everlasting comfort.

We are for the most part even out of the world, before ever we consider our condition in the same; and we then begin to direct our course aright, when the time is come rather to make an end. Would to God we would remember the worthy saying of one, when he was now drawing towards the period of his time: "When I was a young man, my care was how to live well; since age came on, my care hath been how to die well!"[9] And of another, who brake out into these words: "In this life now nothing is more sweet

[7] Gen. vi. 14. [8] Gen. xli. 48.

[9] Quando juvenis, curavi bene vivere; quando senex bene mori.—*Senec. Epist.* 62.

unto me than to prepare for a peaceful passage from the same."[1] With Martha, we are cumbered about many things: Mary, that sat musing, chose the good part.[2] One thing is necessary. Learn, oh Learn to Die. The enemy that is often looked for doth least hurt when he makes his assault. If this basilisk, death, first see us, before we see it, there is some danger; but if we first descry the basilisk, then the serpent dieth; we need not fear. The tempest before expected, doth less annoy when the storm shall arise He that leaveth the world before the world leaves him, thinketh of the day of his dissolution, as the sick man hearkeneth to the clock: [he] shall give death the hand, like a welcome messenger, and with Simeon pray to depart in peace.[3] The weather is yet fair; we may frame an ark to save us from the flood.[4] Jonas yet calls in the street of Nineveh.[5] Wisdom yet crieth to all that pass by, O how long will ye love vanity?[6] The angels are yet at the gates of Sodom. The prophet yet woos, O Judah, how shall I intreat thee?[7] The apostle yet beseecheth for Christ's sake, that we would be reconciled unto God[8]: To conclude: the bridegroom

[1] Nihil suavius in hac vita quam ut quietus fiat exitus ex eadem.—*August. de Matt.* [2] Luke x. 42.
[3] Luke ii. 29. [4] Gen. vii. 5. [5] Jonah iii. 4.
[6] Prov. i. 2. [7] Hosea vi. 4. [8] 2 Cor. v. 20.

yet tarries, and stays the virgins' leisure, to have them enter with him unto the marriage solemnity.[9] Lord! that they would make speed, and cast off many mere vanities, seeing the joys of heaven tarry for them! The pleasures of this world are pleasures in show; but the pleasures that Christ hath laid up for them that are his, are pleasures indeed.

God Almighty increase in our hearts a desire of this learning, that so we may live in his fear, and die in his love, to live for ever!

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## CHAPTER II.

*Wherein is shown the cause why men so seldom enter into a serious remembrance of their end.*

Can we sufficiently wonder that the regenerate man, whom God hath made by grace a contemplative creature, and by glory equalled unto the state of angels, should be so delighted in the affairs of this uncomfortable world,—so enchanted with the harlot-like allurements of sin,—so carried away from himself by the way of sensual security, as utterly to cast away all remembrance of his end, and to become worse than an idol of Canaan, which had eyes, and saw not,—that

[9] Matt. xxv. 7.

is, to have a reasonable soul, and understand not. To induce the sons of men lightly and loosely to pass over a religious remembrance of this their end, is his sleight whose business was, and is, at and since the fall of Adam, to slay souls. Tush! "you shall not die at all."[1] As if he would have the remembrance of death but a melancholy conceit: and lest it should make in man's heart too deep an impression of the fear of God, he will have the forbidden tree to delight the eye, fair words to please the ear, and drive all away. "Why! you shall be as gods,"—when his drift was to have had them devils. By this we see whose practice it is to make the world run at random as it doth, and so many graceless libertines by a careless course to pass over their days in vanity, their years in folly so long, until they be taken by the evil day, when they think not of it, "as birds in the snare, and fishes in the net[2]," saith the wise man, and so become utterly undone for ever. To muse of our end is none of our thoughts: to hear St. Paul speak of judgment to come, is too chilling a doctrine for our delightful dispositions, and makes us cold at the heart. We cannot abide to stay upon such austerities. With Felix[3], we are not at leisure for this jarring music, which sounds not aright in the con-

[1] Gen. iii. 4. [2] Eccl. ix. 12. [3] Acts xxiv. 25.

cert of our worldly pleasures, and therefore we will hear it another time, haply not at all. To think of death, it is Aceldama, a field of blood; but to let the time slide wastefully, and our sins increase dangerously; to promise unto ourselves many days; to hear pleasing words, and to be told of Peace, Peace, though sudden destruction be never so near[4], is our pleasing ditty, until the soul be rocked asleep in sin, and sleep as Sisera[5] (which God forbid!). He slept, but never woke again. Merciful Lord! what will become of this at the last?[6] If nothing else, yet the daily instances of death before us do evidently show what shall in like manner shortly betide ourselves. The interlude is the same; we are now actors upon the stage of this world. They which are gone have played their parts, and we which remain are yet acting ours, only our epilogue is yet for to end. It is a marvel above marvels, that in a battle where so many go to the ground, our remiss hearts can take no warning to enter into some remembrance of our state. The neighbour's fire cannot but give warning of approaching flames. Yesterday to me, to-day to thee.[7] Whose turn is next, God only knows, who knoweth all. He that once thought but to

[4] 1 Thess. v. 3. Jer. viii. 11. [5] Judges iv. 21.
[6] Jer. v. 31.
[7] Mihi heri, tibi hodie. Ecclus. xxxviii. 22.

begin to take his ease, was fain that very night, whether he would or no, to make his end.[8] If nothing else, yet so many, so apparent precedents should move us to shake off this strange forgetfulness, unless that complaint of Cyprian be also verified, "We will not know [we will not acknowledge] that which we cannot but know."[9] Good Lord, into what a dangerous lethargy of the soul are we fallen, when so many objects before our eyes, which are so often sounding in our dullest ears, can nothing move, or at least so little, as suddenly all is gone! Our moving is with Agrippa, a little only[1], but only somewhat, which by and by is forgot again. Our consultations are, "We will, and we will not;" and so with the sluggard, nothing is done. What long discourse have we in our greatest meetings, but dead men are partly, if not chiefly, the subject of the same? How often hear we the solemn knell, when ourselves can say, Well, somebody is gone! Do we not pass by the graves of many who, for age and strength, might have rather seen us lead the way? and yet for all this, to dream as if there were no death at all! Go to, saith Solomon, to the slothful; sleep on. Let fools, as they do, make but a sport of sin[2], and say with the old Epicures,

[8] Luke xii. 20. [9] Cypr. de vanit. Idol. Nolumus agnoscere quod ignorare non possumus.

[1] In modico tantum. [2] Prov. xiv. 2.

"Death is nothing to us—Why, what have we to do with death?"[3] They shall one day find that death will have to do with them, when he shall strip them into a shrouding sheet, bind them hand and foot, and make their last bed to be the hard and strong grave. Of which sort of men, that moan of Moses may justly be renewed: "O that this people were wise, and would remember the latter things!"[4] That they would call to mind "the days will come—and God knoweth how soon too—when the keepers of the house shall tremble (which are the hands), when the strong men shall bow themselves (to wit, the legs), when they shall wax dark, that look out of the windows (that is to say, the eyes), when the ears (or daughters of music) shall be abased, when the grasshoppers (or[5] bended shoulders) shall be a burden, when the wheel shall be broken at the cistern (that is, the heart, whence the head draweth the powers of life): in a word, when dust shall turn to dust again[6];" the joints stiffened, the senses benumbed, the countenance pale, the blood cold, the eyes closed, the brows hardened, the whole body all in faint sweat, wearied. "Hear, O earth, earth[7]!" saith the prophet. Almighty God clothed

[3] B. Ren. in Tertul. de Anima. [4] Deut. xxxii. 29.
[5] ["When grasshoppers on bended shoulders shall be a burden." Edition 1600.]
[6] Eccl. xii. 3—9. [7] Jer. xxii. 29.

our first parents with the skins of dead beasts[8], that when they saw what was about them, they should remember, by reason of sin, what should become of them. When Christ showed, at his transfiguration upon the mount, Peter and James a part of his glory, he showed them withal Moses and Elias[9]: two dead men (or departed from men): which might be withal a remembrance of their mortality. When the prophet David spake of man's uncertain condition and certain end, in the forty-ninth Psalm (because it is so long before the most glorious amongst men, in the eye of the world, will remember themselves to be but men), first, he speaketh unto all: "Hear, all ye people:" and lest any should think themselves exempted, then unto all of all estates: "High and low, rich and poor, one with another:" and because he would have it known to be a matter of importance indeed, he saith, "My mouth shall speak of wisdom, my heart shall talk of understanding[1]:" uttering the self-same twice over, as if we might wonder what the prophet had to say, which is indeed his own wondering. "Seeing that wise men die as well as fools, that death gnaweth upon them, that their beauty shall consume in the sepulchre, that they shall carry nothing away with them, that all their pomp shall leave

[8] Gen. iii. 21. [9] Matt. xvii. 3. [1] Ps. xlix. 1—5.

them when they go and follow the generation of their fathers ; yet for all this, they think that they shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places endure from one generation to another, calling their lands after their own names : this is their foolishness," saith he. And surely as in many other things, the wisdom of man is foolishness with God[2], so is it in this. Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, (as we read in the Gospel,) had a sepulchre in his garden.[3] Surely in places where we take felicity we should not but have a mention, by some good thought at least, of our mortal being. In all other affairs, we are often vigilant, but in this so remiss, as if all were but a game. Did we watch death, which in times of our chiefest delights most watcheth us, and often taketh us too ; then would we not live as we live, and sin as we sin, but give to a thousand dalliances a bill of divorce, as if for their baggage-dealing we would have no more to do with them. But so long as we live, we spend our days as if we had an estate of fee simple, or patent at large, to continue as we list, to commit sin as easily as beasts drink water, without remorse, without fear.

One of the greatest evils in the life of man, is a careless neglect of God's worship. One of the greatest causes of this neglect,

[2] 1 Cor. i. 25. [3] John xix. 41.

is the forgetfulness of his end. "Therefore (saith Gregory) do so many cast off all care of Christian piety, because they never care at all to mind their present condition of human frailty."[4] When the Prophet Jeremy would show the state of Jerusalem to have become altogether irreligious, without mentioning many causes, he expresseth the main cause in brief, as thus: "She remembered not her end."[5] So by this we see Satan hath no more dangerous device to draw men from God (like Absalom, who stole away the hearts of the people when they were going down to do homage to David their king[6]), than by stealing from their hearts this remembrance of their end. The panther, as is written of him, knowing how beasts fly from him by reason of his ugly head, which frays them, thrusts only his head in some secret corner; whilst they are gazing on his goodly spotted hide, nothing suspecting their approaching end, suddenly he breaketh out, and preyeth upon them; so this foul-headed panther, Satan, perceiving well how much delight men take in worldly pleasures, hideth his deformed head, setting out his fine coloured skin, that is, the glory and vanity of pleasant but dangerous delights, (whilst in the mean time they are neglecting their enemy,—

[4] Greg. Mor. [5] Lam. i. 9. [6] 2 Sam. xv. 6.

their end,) he suddenly seeketh to entrap and devour them.

Wherefore men had need be prepared and vigilant in this respect, that they may be ever provided against his so subtle deceits, and remember their end before it end them, that is, before it be said, as unto Ahaziah, "Thou shalt not come down from the bed into the which thou art gone up[7];" and that which is chiefest of all, before the soul by a consumption of sin pine to death. —Blessed Lord! who, were he not careless in the superlative degree, would not sometimes retire himself from this cumbersome world, and remember that which almost he cannot forget,—that he must one day die? Why did God leave, saith St. Austin, our last day of our life unknown to us? was it not because every day should be prepared of us? which preparing we may not neglect upon pain and peril of loss for ever.[8] Wherefore let them take heed in time, who pass over their days, Pharaoh-like, Atheist-like, saying, "Who is the Lord?"[9] "We have sinned, and what evil is happened unto us?"[1] Be they well assured, that death, like a sergeant sent from above, upon an action of debt, at the suit of Nature herself, will sooner or later attach and arrest them all, and make them answer

[7] 2 Kings i. 4.
[8] Aug. Ep. ad Diesc.
[9] Exod. v. 2.
[1] Ecclus. v. 4.

this high contempt, where God Himself is a party at the court of heaven. Let them know that all must yield: be they as strong as Samson, as glorious as Herod, as mighty as Alexander, this tyrant, Time, will sweep them all away,—Moses upon the Mount Abarim[2], Aaron upon the Mount Hor[3], Methuselah after so many years.[4] The holiest, the healthiest, where or when, we know not; all must down when death cometh. We daily see it, and will not stick sometimes ourselves to say as much, and yet remember nothing less, as if it were only some arbitrable matter; and so we bring our years to an end, as it were a tale that is told. Of all other, we cannot sufficiently marvel that old men, when as now drooping nature putteth them in mind that their continuance is not long, when bended back makes them look down, whether they will or no, and bids them think of their hearse or grave; to see these either addicted to the insatiable desire of gain, or given unto the lightest behaviour of youth, shows them to be far from this religious remembrance of their end. Sophocles, a heathen man, would blush for shame, to see the most unseemly matches and marriages of our time. Wherein age and youth are yoked to-

[2] Deut. xxxii. 49.
[3] Numb. xx. 23.
[4] Gen. v. 27.

gether ; a thing so contrary in nature, so unseemly in reason, as nothing more ; and the inexcusable folly of age, to be so far from a consideration of that which is seemly both before God and man. Tully could say long ago, of civil government amongst men, "old men's weapons, what should they else be but exercises of virtue?"[5] In Christianity, more fitter were it a great deal for them to be at their devotions, than to do often as they do. Isaac thought it time at these days to commune of blessing, and of his end : "My son, let me bless thee : I am old, and know not the time of my departure."[6]

They do as much labour in effect and more, that sit at the stern and govern, as those that toil and toss otherwise : but to move age to this consideration, the very beholding of others that go before them, is in reason sufficient. When the third governor over fifty, of whom mention is made in the second book of Kings, saw but his two fellow-captains over fifty devoured before him, it went so near his heart, that he came forth, fell down, and besought the man of God, that his life might be precious in his sight.[7] How many fifties, in late years of mortality and war, have we seen, or heard to have been

[5] Aptissima arma senum exercitationes virtutum.—*Cicero de Senect.*

[6] Gen. xxvii. 2.

[7] 2 Kings i. 13.

devoured by death! How many of our fellow-soldiers, in this spiritual conflict in which we all fight, have we seen die in the field! How many of our dearest friends have taken their leave and gone before! and yet for all this, there is no coming to make humble supplication, (I say not, to the man of God, but to God Himself,) that our lives and deaths may be "precious in his sight," as is, saith David, the death of his Saints.[8] The publicans but hearing the axe to be laid to the root of the tree, and that every tree which did not bring forth fruit should be hewn down, and cast into the fire, it made them come to John the Baptist with their O what shall we do to avoid these things?[9] The men of Nineveh hearing but once of their imminent end, it wrought such and so great remorse in them, as they all out of hand fasted, put on sackcloth, and sorrowed for their sins. Often hath God knocked at the door of our hearts, to advertise us of our mortality[1]; for who is there that hath not some time experienced in himself, (by feeling the infirmity of his declining nature,—by avoiding the perils of apparent danger,) besides the sundry warnings to this effect, whither we must?

And here we may all wonder at the mercy

[8] Ps. cxvi. 15.
[9] Luke iii. 8, 9.
[1] John iii. 8.

and patience of God, who by these motives doth admonish us of our approaching end. But yet for all this, how little humbling of ourselves is there before Him whose dominion reacheth unto the ends of the earth, whose power is above all powers, from generation to generation, world without end, who bringeth to the grave and raiseth up again![2] What a dangerous course is it never to awake Christ though the ship leak, and be often in peril of drowning,—never to think of God, until we stand in need of Him,—never to begin to live until we are ready to die,—never to call to mind that time of times, until we hear the trump sounding[3], until we see the graves opening, the earth flaming, the heavens melting[4], the judgment hastening, the Judge with all his angels coming in the clouds to denounce the last doom upon all flesh[5], which will be unto some woe, woe! when they shall cry unto the mountains[6] to cover them, and for shame for their sins, hide themselves, if it were possible, in hell fire! If we have any fear, this should move fear; if any remembrance, this should cause a careful remembrance of our end. O consider, saith the prophet, you that forget God, lest He take you away, and there be none to de-

[2] 1 Sam. ii. 6. [3] 1 Thess. iv. 16, & John v. 25.
[4] 2 Pet. iii. 10. [5] Matt. xvi. 27, & Matt. xxv. 41.
[6] Rev. vi. 16.

liver you.[7] Salvation is a matter of great earnest. Our Saviour Christ, by those parables of the wise virgins[8] and watchful servants[9], what else doth He teach his disciples and us all, but in so weighty a cause to be careful indeed? We have as much need as any that ever lived under the cope of Heaven, considering these sinful days. When God said, the wickedness of man is great upon earth, it was time for Noah to prepare for an ark to save himself.[1] When once the cry of Sodom was ascended to Heaven, it was time for Lot to think of his departure unto the hill countries.[2] When this world, now after many strong fits of great contentions, begins to trifle idly with every fancy, we may partly gather by these sickly signs, which way it is drawing, and say, God of Heaven, help this world, for it is a weak world indeed. These be no days to live securely in; but rather time, and high time is it for every one to amend one, that God may have mercy upon us all. Have we not example by them that sleep until the bridegroom's coming, that every knock will not be sufficient warrant to enter? by him that wept for a blessing when it was too late[3]; that every sigh will not be a satisfaction for our sins? It is

[7] Ps. l. 22. [8] Matt. xxv. 3. [9] Luke xii. 37.
[1] Gen. vi. 5. [2] Ib. xix. 14.
[3] Matt. xxv. 11. Gen. xxvii. 38.

most sure : and we had need look to it in time. Where the tree falleth there it lieth.[4] And as the last day, (saith St. Austin) of our life leaveth us, so shall the day of doom find us. To let all alone until it be too late, was their folly who long since were drowned in the flood.[5] To cast only for wealth and ease was his worldly wisdom that made a sudden farewell from both, when that night his soul was taken from him, and not yielded of him.[6] To defer all unto the last push, never entering into a religious remembrance of our end, is an effect of that evil spirit called sensual security ; which kind of spirit is not cast out but by fasting and prayer.

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## CHAPTER III.

*How behoveful it is for every Christian man soberly to meditate on his end.*

In the whole tenour of a Christian life, no part is more heavenly than that we spend in religious meditation; for this religious meditation no subject more nearly concerneth the state of man, than often to beat upon a religious remembrance of his end, wherein con-

[4] Eccles. xi. 3. [5] Gen. vii. 21. [6] Luke xii. 20.

sisteth the centre of all his desires, the harvest of all his labours, his sure and most happy repose for ever. How behoveful, then, is it for every one to sequester himself sometimes from incumbrances of this world[7], to be at leisure for God, and to call his best thoughts to counsel to this business of his soul: the manifold effects of so good a practice will easily show and approve as much. For who is there that, with Hezekias, will not fail to set his household, his life, his soul, and all in order, when once that of the prophet moves his very heart, 'Hezekias—now God be merciful unto thee!—thou art no longer a man of this world; dispatch, to be gone; thou must shortly die!'[8] Who is there that will not sit down and cast over his bills of accounts before he runs too far in arrears, that thinks thoroughly he shall (before long be) hear his Master's voice, to warn him out of office: "Thou shalt be no longer steward?"[9] In a generality, how this or the like remembrance causeth a careful direction of all our life, when any temptation doth come, that of the wise man doth briefly express: "My son, remember thy end, in whatsoever thou shalt take in hand, and thou shalt never do amiss."[1] This remembrance, if it did sink into the heart, (whereas often,

[7] Vacare Deo. [8] Isa. xxxviii. 1. [9] Luke xvi. 2.
[1] Ecclus. vii. 36.

like a piece of music, it soundeth in the ear,) then would it work better effects in the world than commonly it is wont. If covetous men, who seem possessed with a spirit of having, who, like moles and ants, are always turning in the earth: if the proud, who, like tyrants, with contempt disdain the meaner sort of men, who are made of the same mould as well as they, did deeply consider, that one of these days, they shall become a clod of earth; when, like a State-searcher, Death will see they carry away nothing with them, when these lofty looks shall be laid full low, and all their glory be eclipsed; some good thought to this effect would make them say, with Naaman the Syrian, "God be merciful unto us, in this one thing[2]," that we think not oftener of our end. Would any Amnon commit that freely in the sight of God, which he shameth to commit in the sight of the meanest of all God's creatures?[3] Would any Ahab oppress or wrong poor Naboths, if he did himself remember he were but a sojourner, as were his forefathers[4]; and that after an evil course, he must shortly go to answer for all; when the heart shall feel, for wrong offered, many a cold pull, and the sins lie upon the soul as heavy as lead?

[2] 2 Kings v. 18.
[3] 2 Sam. xiii. 19.
[4] 1 Kings xxi. 9.

Our Saviour Christ said, to forewarn revolters, Remember Lot's wife.[5] So may it be said, to advise all oppressors, Remember poor Naboth's vineyard. To call to mind that this world, and the glory thereof, so soon passeth away, that we are here to-day, and gone to-morrow,—if nothing else, yet with men of reasonable capacities, this were enough, were it considered, to contain them within the lists and limits of a Christian and conscionable course. But because this is not considered, so many live as if they had no souls to save. Such is the calamity of our time, but it was not so from the beginning. The godly patriarchs, in purchasing only a place to bury in, what doth it else, but manifestly show unto succeeding posterity, how mindful they were of their state mortal? That song of Moses, which the ancient fathers say the people of God used, in form of a daily prayer, to wit, the 90th Psalm, wherein both man's frailty is acknowledged, as also this petition pathetically inserted: "Lord, teach us to number our days[6]," doth it not show unto us with what devotion they daily entered into a remembrance of their end? Where is that mindfulness of Abraham, so great a patriarch, who confessed himself to be but dust and ashes[7]; of Job, who daily waited till his changings should

[5] Luke xvii. 32. [6] Psalm xc. 12. [7] Gen. xviii. 27.

come[8]; of king David, who made no other reckoning of himself, but to be only a stranger amongst men[9]; of the Apostle St. Peter, who counted his continuance here but an abode in a tabernacle, which he should shortly lay off?[1] Tabernacles were only for men in warfare and pilgrims, to show, while we are in these bodies, we are no other, but men ready to remove. How far these were from setting their repose here in earth, we may hence easily perceive. Amongst heathen men, the emperors, when they were crowned, the sepulchres of dead men were shown unto them, and they asked what one should be made for them, thereby putting them in remembrance that they must look for no other, but themselves shortly to have the like. For the old saints and servants of God, who lived in a continual farewell from the world, like wise merchants always thinking of their return, endeavour to take up treasures by bills of receipt, where they should stay, and make their abode for ever. Jacob was careful in his journey to Haran; Jacob slept, the same night God showed him a ladder, the top whereof reached to heaven[2]; 'Jacob,' that is 'the journey thou and all pilgrims should be careful of indeed.' The philosophers who saw no farther than the clouds of human

[8] Job xiv. 14.
[9] Psalm xxxix. 12.
[1] 2 Pet. i. 13.
[2] Gen. xxviii. 12.

reason, perceiving the declining course of human nature, could say, The life of wise men what should it else be, but a continual meditation of death?

If any to exercise himself in this speculative remembrance of his state, would keep a catalogue to this end, and often recite by name, how many reverend prelates, how many grave counsellors, how many worthy men of arms, and gallants of the world, how many of his nearest familiars he had known, within these few years, to have flourished, with their troops and trains after them, saying (Good Lord!) Are they not dead and rotten? are they not all gone, almost as if they never had been? why should men make so much account of this world, that is so transitory? Again, what more effectual mean to make us shake off the allurements of this life, as Paul did the viper into the fire[3], than this of the like religious meditation of our end? Almighty God would show the prophet Jeremy, in no other place than a house of clay[4], the state and condition of the despisers of his word, to signify that we are best lessoned, where our frail estate may be best considered. The wise man could not but wonder, why any should be puffed up with pride, considering what he was: O earth, saith he, why art thou proud?[5] As if all our

[3] Acts xxviii. 5. [4] Jer. xviii. 2, 3. [5] Ecclus. x. 9.

pomp and ourselves too, were no better than the ground we tread upon. A strange case to see the meanness of our estate, and yet to exalt ourselves; to consider upon how weak a foundation we stand, and to think of nothing less! If we will needs be high-minded, would to God we would set our minds on heavenly things, or things on high![6] For consideration necessary is it to think of that which must necessarily befall, were it but only for that which stands like the law of the Medes and Persians: "It is appointed unto all men once to die."[7] This were enough to cast a cloud over all men's fairest delights. But that same, "And after that the judgment," there is somewhat more behind, and that is called the time of judgment; this once possessing the heart, there need not so many penal laws to deter them and their affections, which are often so far out of square, from extreme impiety. The cock (saith one), fearing the eagle and the hawk, hath one eye fixed on his meat, and the other often directed in the air. So a provident godly man, providing beforehand things necessary, hath respect unto the eagle, or Christ's coming in the air to judgment, as also unto the hawk, which is death, therefore called Rapax, because it suddenly seizeth and preyeth upon all. A general restraint

[6] Coloss. iii. 2. [7] Heb. ix. 27.

from evil (saith Cassianus, an ancient writer) is a mindfulness of death, which the Egyptians perceiving, thought a bare resemblance thereof, all trembling and shaking, brought in at their solemn feasts, to be a special mean to move the beholders unto sobriety.[8] The Centurion in the Gospel, who otherwise was far off from acknowledging the Saviour of the world, when he saw the veil rent, the earth move, the stones cleave asunder, the heavens mourn in black, and after all, the graves themselves to open, and yield up the dead bodies of the saints—a spectacle of death amidst all, moved him to give this testimony, "Surely this was the Son of God."[9]

Seeing then, that hence arise so forcible motives unto a godly and careful direction of our ways, did we but sometimes behold that pale horse and him that sits thereon, whose name is Death[1], in our musing dispositions, it would make us trample under foot many alluring occasions, and cause us to step back in the pursuit of some sinful vanities. The Holy Ghost resembling the state of man to the grass, to a shadow, the smoke, a vapour, a flower, things of so small continuance, what else would he intimate unto us, but a consideration of our inconstant and variable

[8] Cass. Col. 18.
[1] Rev. vi. 8.
[9] Matt. xxvii. 54.

estate?[2] The Apostle St. Peter unto the dispersed Jews and converted Christians, to draw them from carnal desires, used this as an argument of effect: I beseech you, saith he, as pilgrims and strangers[3]; as if he should have said, Seeing you are in this world but as wayfaring men, stay not yourselves upon carnal desires, the baits of Satan, and very bane of your souls; abstain from them, fly them. It is the manner of strangers, not to intermeddle with many, much less dangerous attempts, but as wise and circumspect men, to remember they are only in a way to a farther home of more continuance, where they are to make their abode. Wherefore, saith St. Austin, Let us meditate in this life, of nothing more than of our pilgrimage, that here we shall not always be; preparing ourselves rather to that place whence we shall never depart, but have a sure stay for ever.[4] And St. Jerome, He that doth remember, that die he must, little regarding things present, ever hasteth towards things to come[5], which the old enemy of man perceiving, seeketh nothing

[2] Ps. cxliv. 4. Job vii. 7. James i. 11. Ps. cii. 3. James iv. 14.

[3] 1 Pet. ii. 11.

[4] Nihil aliud in hac vita peregrinationis nostræ meditemur, nisi quia hic non semper erimus, et ibi locum bene vivendo præparabimus, unde nunquam migrabimus.—*Aug.* 31. *Tractat. in Joan.*

[5] Qui quotidie recordatur se esse moriturum, contemnit præsentia, et ad futura festinat. *Hier. ad Paul.*

more than to draw us from this frequent meditation of death, chiefly by the pleasurable allurements of enticing vanities. The hunter when he seeketh to take the tiger's young (which is only one) is said to set up looking glasses, where the tiger should pass along in seeking this young, which she doth sometimes by straying abroad, lose ; finding in the glass a resemblance of herself, leaves the pursuit, and loseth the young. This old enemy, perceiving man's industry, in the conservation of that which is one and only one, his dear soul, would by many goodly shows make us neglect this religious care, and stay ourselves upon any frivolous delight, so long, that we clean forget whereabout we go, and so hazard that which the prophet calleth most precious, even the redemption of our souls.[6] But the provident Christian man, knowing how dangerous it must needs be, for the bird to take delight amidst the gins and snares of the fowler, makes no stay upon these enticing evils, soars aloft, and taking the wings of contemplation, thinks of the joys of heaven, the pains of hell, his own death and the death of the Son of God, for the salvation of us all ; with Daniel, straws ashes or thoughts of his earthly being, to descry the steps of death, who stealeth along and eateth to the con-

[6] Psalm xlix. 8.

tinuance of our days ; or like a skilful pilot, who often sits at the stern, looks unto the stars and planets, bears off from the shelves of many dangerous occasions, that so by the prosperous gale of God's Holy Spirit he may put into the port of everlasting rest. No servants more orderly use their master's talents, than those who ever fear their master's sudden return.[7] No householder more safe, than he who at every watch suspecteth the thieves entering.[8] When that of the prophet Isaiah calls us aside from the world, and tells us softly, "Thou shalt die," it makes us penitent for the time past, and respective for the time to come, causing the fear of God to have a predominant force, in this our natural, and otherwise weakly constitution. To meditate, therefore, of our end, at our lying down, which doth resemble the grave, and our rising up, which may mind us of a joyful resurrection ; to make this remembrance the key to open the day, and shut in the night, is a behoveful practice ; and we shall soon perceive it, by the manifold effects, which do then consequently ensue. Isaac, upon Sarah's death, went forth to meditate.[9] Having lost Sarah, he met Rebecca. We sometimes lose earthly comfort, but going forth religiously to meditate upon God's

[7] Luke xii. 38. [8] Matt. xxiv. 43. [9] Gen. xxiv. 63.

excellency, and our own frailty, we meet with Rebecca, better comfort, that is to say, heavenly.

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## CHAPTER IV.

*Wherein is showed that the state and condition of the life present may justly move us to this consideration.*

Amongst the manifold reasons which may induce us to this religious remembrance of our end, none more effectual than a due consideration of our estate present. For what is our life but a Jonas' gourd, suddenly sprung up, and by and by withered again and gone[1]? but a Jacob's pilgrimage, the days whereof are in number few, and in condition evil?[2] Is not all our glory but as the visions which Esdras saw, goodly to look upon, and vanished in a moment[3]? or as Nebuchadnezzar's image, that had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver[4], and yet one dash with a stone out of the rock brought all to ruin? May it not be said of the goodly pomp, and most glorious shows which we so much admire among men, as Christ said of the buildings of the temple,

[1] Jonah iv. 6.
[2] Gen. xlvii. 9.
[3] 2 Esdras viii.
[4] Dan. ii. 32.

"See you not these things? verily, there shall not be left a stone upon a stone[5];" as if little or no mention at all should be left? As for popular applause, is it not much like smoke, which the higher it mounteth the sooner it vanisheth away? And for beauty, doth not some few fits of a fever mar all the fashion? O the inconstancy of all worldly glory! All its stately and pageant-like pomp shall vanish away, and come to nothing, as if it never had been. He that had come to the tomb of Alexander the Great, and there found interred within the compass of seven feet, him whom a whole world could not suffice, might he not justly say, Is here the mirror of the world? Is here the flourishing monarch of his time? O world, most unworthy to be affected of us! We are but tenants at will in this clay farm; the foundation of all the building is a small substance, always kept cold by an intercourse of air; the pillar whereupon the whole frame stays, is only the passage of a little breath; the strength, some few bones tied together with dry strings or sinews: howsoever we piece and patch this poor cottage, it will at last fall into the Lord's hands, and we must give surrender, when death shall say, This or this man's time is come. First, we mourn for others; a little

[5] Mark xiii. 2.

after, others mourn for us. Now, we supply the places, and offices, and heritages of them that were before; and, ere long be, others shall come afresh in our rooms, and rule where we rule, sway where we sway, and possess all which we have scratched together with care, kept with fear, and at last left with sorrow. Whereby we see, that we came not into this world to build houses or purchase lands, and join house to house, but rather, by this our short continuance, we are put in mind to have these temporal things in use, but eternal things in desire; to use this world as if we used it not, and so be gone.[6]

To this short continuance of life may be added, the miseries of the same. For all is not life, we here live. When Job said, "Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live[7]," he by and by showeth how this time is annoyed, "and is (saith he) full of misery." Hereupon, by the Grecians, the first day of the life of man was called "a beginning of conflicts;" our ingress and egress is with signs of sorrow. St. Austin saith, of man's first entrance into the world[8], A tender infant, not able to speak, doth by tears prophesy of the sorrows incident in the life of man. Come we to our new birth, according to grace, do we

[6] 1 Cor. vii. 31. [7] Job xiv. 1.
[8] Nondum loquitur et tamen prophetat.

not in baptism take our prest-money to fight a battle under the banner of Christ our chieftain? "And thou needest not," saith St. Austin[9], "care to fight against many enemies, for be thou well assured, many enemies will fight against thee;" which combat Cyprian declareth after this manner: "If thou, O man, overcome covetousness, covetousness being overcome, some evil affection will assail thee: if that evil affection be strangled, vain-glory will allure thee: if vain-glory be despised, wrath and a desire of revenge will incense thee: if wrath be pacified, then pride will puff thee up: if pride be allayed, some other enemy will step to give thee a fresh assault."[1] As if the whole life of man were no other but a continual hacking and hewing at, and of these hydra's heads of sin. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death[2]: to show that until death be come and gone, an end of enemies will never come. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying, (saith St. John) Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; they rest from their labours."[3] As if the saints never rest until rest and blessedness meet together. Here the flesh is the field wherein we must be ever toiling.

[9] Aug. de Pug. Animæ.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 26.
[1] Cyprian de Mor.
[3] Rev. xiv. 13.

Sin is the Jebusite, that will be ever troubling: the world is the step-mother to God's children, that will be ever chiding: afflictions are the waters where our Gideon will try whether we are fit soldiers to fight his battle.[4] We read, that the people much murmured in the wilderness[5], thinking, after their deliverance out of Egypt, to have found their sweetness there. The people were deceived: God keepeth that until we come into the land of promise. We must not look for our happiness here, God keepeth that until we come into the holy land. Here we are every day gathering manna: when the long sabbath comes, then we cease gathering. Joseph gave his brethren provision for the way; but the full sacks were kept in store until they came home unto their father's house.[6] God gives us here a taste and assay of his goodness; but the full sacks are kept in store, until we come unto his heavenly kingdom. For this life, "Adam, in the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat thy bread. Nay, in labour and sorrow shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life, until thou return unto the earth out of which thou wast taken." As if the days of man, by reason of sinning, were no other but

[4] Judg. vii. 4. [5] Num. xi. xvi. xxi.
[6] Gen. xlii. 25.

the days of sorrow ; because every day hath his grief[7]: and every night his terror.[8] So that in this the ancient saying will be verified, The life of man is rather calamity than life. If one have goods and substance, he liveth in travail, and is fain to imprison his money under lock and bolt, for fear it should fly from him. If he be destitute and needy, he liveth in grief, because want is grievous unto man's nature. If he be in high estate, he is either envied, or envieth ; as if the chiefest felicity of worldlings were infelicity, and no other but a very shining misery. If we will hear Augustus, so great a potentate, we shall find him wishing rather to lead a private life, than to enjoy the whole regal empire of the west. Cyrus, King of Persia, was wont to say, "That did men but know the infinite cares he sustained under an imperial crown, he thought no man would so much as stoop to take it up." If these, who had the chiefest glory amongst men, found all so wearisome, much more may the Christian soul resolve never to sing her sweet requiem, until she come to bear a part in that joyful quire of saints and angels, above in heaven. "For the delights of sin may go down as the wine, (saith Solomon) pleasantly at the first, but at last they bite like a serpent ; and are as the

[7] Matt. vi. 34. [8] Ps. xci. 5.

rose when the flower is gone, there remains nothing but a prick." In a word, they play us a very tragedy. Howsoever they begin with applause, yet at the shutting up of all they will end with horror. In the mean time do we not see the vices themselves reward their followers with sundry griefs and infirmities at the last, and their fairest end often to be extreme penury? For the world itself, doth it not (saith St. John) pass away, and the lusts thereof? Doth it not show men a very Judas' part, and betray them unto Satan, saying, Whom I kiss with a feigned sign of love, take them, torture them; which is enough to make them out of love to this world; and with Lot, to get them from Sodom, or, with the saints, to come out of Babylon (or the affections of this sinful world), that they be not partakers of the punishment to be inflicted upon the same?

Now, to come a little to the state of those in this world, whose inheritance is above, what else do they find it but a main sea of calamities, where they are tossed with the billows of many storms, and do feel this passage full of bitterness? Lest they should take too much delight in wafting to and fro upon worldly pleasures, God doth ballast their ship with some affliction, to see a little the state of God's own friends. There was never yet a

Moses, but he had a Jannes and a Jambres to resist him.[9] Never was there a good Joseph, but he had in his own father's house unkind brethren to envy him.[1] Never an Elijah, but a Jezebel to hunt him.[2] Never a Paul, but an Alexander to do him much evil.[3] Never a reverend Athanasius, or most learned and painful bishop of his time, but bold spirited schismatics wrongfully to malign him.[4] Wherefore to have enemies in this world we must be content: it was his case that now sits at the right hand of God in heaven to suffer persecution: it is no new accident. Our Saviour said to his disciples, The prophets of old drank of the same cup; all suffered.[5]

From this annoyance we may come unto the domestical or home troubles within ourselves; where old Adam or nature, like Hagar the bondwoman, is very disdainful towards her mistress Sarah[6], to wit, infused grace: where the rebellious appetites conspire against the regimen of reason: where our will, like another Eve, is still provoking us to reach after the forbidden fruit: where sin, like Tarquinius the Proud, would tyrannise and usurp a perpetual dictatorship[7], did not the regenerate,

[9] Exod. vii. 11. 2 Tim. iii. 8.
[1] Gen. xxxvii. 11.
[2] 1 Kings xix. 2.
[3] 1 Tim. i. 20.
[4] Soc. Hist. Eccles. lib. i. cap. 20.
[5] Matt. v. 12.
[6] Gen. xvi. 4.
[7] Rom. vi. 12.

like men of courage and constancy, cast him out of his kingdom. And thus labouring to bring all to that seemly monarchy of God's Spirit, no small labour and travail is undertaken. In pleasing men we often incur a greater loss by displeasing God: by pleasing God (which is best of all) we oftentimes displease men. So which way soever we cast our eyes, we see and find that of the wise man verified; great travail is created for all men, and a heavy yoke for the sons of Adam[8], from the day that they come out of their mother's womb, to the day that they return to the earth, the mother of all things: from him that sitteth on the glorious throne, unto him that is beneath in earth and ashes. This being the estate of all in general, sinners corrected, sons chastened, nay, the evil themselves much tossed and turmoiled, they that worship the beast (saith St. John) "have no rest day nor night[9]," as they have not who make an idol of sensual pleasure. Look how many vices, so many furies, are wont to haunt the licentious livers. But the good, who only have their trials, and are proved, with Simon of Cyrene, every one with his cross must be content to accompany Christ unto his kingdom.[1] Manifold troubles are incident to all, but in more special manner unto those who

[8] Ecclus. xl. 1.
[9] Rev. xiv. 11.
[1] Matt. xxvii. 32.

are going from the dirt and mire of Egypt, to do sacrifice to God[2], who will bring them into a good land, the remembrance whereof may make them wish, with David, that they had wings like a dove, and so flying they might come to rest.[3] Wherefore, for these transitory and fleeting delights of this sinful world, happy are we if we see them; more happy if we shun them; but most happy of all, when God shall take us clean from them, when we shall be delivered from this irksome necessity of sinning.

It is some comfort unto the wayfaring man to commune of his journey's end. Joyfully doth the bondman reckon of the year of Jubilee. This wearisome pilgrimage of ours may justly move us, this burdensome bondage may move us indeed, to enter into a sad remembrance of our end, and pause with that of the Apostle, Meditate of these things. Elijah fled but a day's journey before Jezebel, and he said "It is enough; Lord, take my soul."[4] The angel would have Tobit rejoice: Tobit replied, "What joy can I have, that do here sit in darkness, and do not behold the light of the sun?"[5] Those of Babylon would have the Israelites sing them a song. Alas! what song could they sing,

[2] Exod. viii. 25. [3] Ps. lv. 5. [4] 1 Kings xix. 4.
[5] Tobit v. 13.—This passage appears in the Vulgate, but is not found in the Greek.—Ed.

being so sorrowful captives as they were?[6] Here we are flying before many Jezebels. Here we sit in darkness, and see not the true light, that doth shine above in glory. Here we are poor captives; what rejoicing should we have in a vale of tears, in so low and marshy a soil, naturally subject unto moisture? This far country[7] is full of penury and sorrow; no plenty, no music, until we return unto our Father's house. While we are on this side Jordan, we are amidst many trials; and, to say truth, we may look for no other. We find that of St. Austin true, What is it to live long, but to be long troubled?[8] We read that Noah's dove, at her first flight from the ark, (well she might mount aloft) fetched many retires, but she could have no resting-place, until Noah opened the window of the ark to receive her in again.[9] So the poor soul may soar a time, by lifting up many a sigh and supplication unto God, who at last doth open the window of his heavenly ark; and then, but not before, she hath sure footing to rest for ever. Those good men, saith the apostle St. Paul, in the eleventh to the Hebrews, of whom sometimes the bad world was unworthy, wandered up and down in sheepskins, in deserts, as men forlorn, showing

[6] Ps. cxxxvii. 4.

[7] Luke xv. 14.

[8] Quid est diu vivere, nisi diu torqueri?—*August. de Ver. Dom Serm.* 70.

[9] Gen. viii. 9.

evidently, that their glory was not of this world, where they found so sorry acceptance, and therefore had their hope full of immortality, hoping for a reward to come.[1]

Now, therefore, seeing in this state of life, all is so troublesome; enemies at home, enemies abroad, perils on every side[2]: a Christian meditation of our departure from this world may tell us, All will one day be better. That we should not think of our continuance here, we see this life to be only a pilgrimage. That we should not take the way for our country, or think of setting up our rest where our state is so cumbersome, where we have much wormwood, but little honey; more motives to read the Lamentations of Jeremy, than we have to sing the Song of Solomon,—God would have it so, that we should look for another home, and hope for a better rest. If every creature groan[3], then much more may man, the most excellent of all creatures, waiting for that adoption of the sons of God, which shall be given in the resurrection of the just. When the prophet Micah[4] would raise up the pensive hearts of the people, in the time of their captivity, he put them in mind of their departure, as thus: Arise, to be gone, here is not your place of rest.

[1] Heb. xi. 38.
[2] 2 Cor. xi. 26.
[3] Rom. viii. 22.
[4] Micah ii. 10.

In like manner, to quicken a little our weary spirits, amidst many calamities, the lifting up of our hearts, by a meditation of our deliverance from this earthly thraldom, as the prison of the soul, will tell us of a blessed state to come, where we shall have rest, which is the end of every motion, and the perfection of all our labours.

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## CHAPTER V.

*That a consideration of the life to come may move in us the same remembrance of our end.*

It is a rule in natural philosophy, that to see the planets and those superior lights at midday, men must go down into some wondrous deep pit or well, clean from the light of the horizon where they live. To behold with the eye of the soul the light and joys of the life to come, men must be far removed from the love and delights of this inferior world. The people never tasted manna until they were come from the leaven of Egypt.[5] Our ancestors, when they saw no other but straw cottages, they never minded any farther buildings; but when once they beheld more seemly mansions, they began forthwith to dislike that which before was very acceptable

[5] Exod. xvi. 15.

unto them. Whilst we set our affections on earthly things, we seek for no better, we look no higher; but once taking a taste of heavenly, we begin to dislike that which before was very acceptable unto us, and grow out of liking with the meanest of our former desires. And therefore as Zaccheus, so long as he abode in the press, was upon too low ground to see Christ, until he gat him up into the fig-tree[6], so while we are in the route of too many worldly affairs, we are too low, and therefore should get up into the sweet fig-tree, or contemplation of heavenly things, that there and thence we may see the joy of Israel, or excellency of the life to come. God said unto Abraham, Arise, and walk about this land; this is the country that I will give thee.[7] God says unto Faith, Arise, behold thy heavenly inheritance; that is the city where thou shalt have thy blessed abode for ever. Seafaring men having been long weather-beaten in the surging and dangerous seas, are wont to shout for joy when they do descry their haven. Joyfully may the Christian behold afar off, after the manifold storms of this world, his heavenly and everlasting harbour, the remembrance whereof may move us either to wish, with Paul, to be dissolved and be with Christ[8], or reply with

[6] Luke xix. 3. [7] Gen. xiii. 17. [8] Phil. i. 23.

the saints in the Apocalypse, unto him that said, I come, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."[9] Here we do but sow in tears; there is the place where we shall reap in joy. Here we are members of the church militant, where is nothing but combating; there shall we be parts of the church triumphant, where is no other but rejoicing. The state of the life present and to come is figured by the tabernacle and temple of the Old Testament[1]: the tabernacle, for that it was moveable, may resemble the condition of the life present: the temple, for that it was fixed and immoveable, the fruition of the life to come.[2] To the framing of the tabernacle came the Jews only; but to the building of the temple, with the inhabitants of Jewry, the men of Tyre and Sidon, to wit, both Jews and Gentiles, all concur in this building, wherein is never heard the noise of a hammer. "Blessed are they, O Lord," said David, "that dwell in thy house[3]," where the Son of God in glory is light unto their eyes, music unto their ears, sweetness unto their taste, and contentment unto their heart; where in seeing, they shall know Him; in knowing, they shall possess Him; in possessing, they shall love Him; in loving, they shall receive eternal blessed-

[9] Rev. xxii. 20.
[2] 1 Kings viii. 13.
[1] 1 Sam. vi. 3.
[3] Ps. lxxxiv. 4.

ness, and blessed eternity; which is the garland we all run for[4]; the crown we all fight for.[5] All our watching, and fasting, and praying, is like Jacob's striving with the angel[6]: "O bless me, Lord." Every thing doth in nature require a perfection; the heavens, which are in continual motion; the angels, which are ascending and descending, are said not to have their full perfection; but specially man, in this troublesome motion, until he come to the accomplishment of all his hope. If the apostle, which was taken up into the third heaven, and is thought to have seen part of this blessedness, could not express the excellency thereof, being so high a subject (the more he did consider of it, the more he seemed to wonder at it), yet thus much he could say, that "eye had not seen, ear had not heard, the heart of man could not conceive the things that God had prepared for them that love him."[7] Reach as far as human understanding can reach, all is not answerable unto the same. "Of things infinite, we cannot but infinitely consider." To lift up our eyes towards those glistering beams of God's glory, where the sharpest eagle may be dazzled; to wade into the depth of his excellency, wherein a camel may be

[4] 1 Cor. ix. 24.
[5] 2 Tim. iv. 7.
[6] Gen. xxxii. 26.
[7] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

plunged, the short reach of human reason may move us to cry with the apostle, O the depth of the love, and bounty, and mercy of God! They that come unto the main ocean find water enough, if they come by millions, to take handfuls of it. Be there a multitude which no tongue can number, God hath crowns for their heads, and palms for their hands, when they shall follow the Lamb, wheresoever He goeth, when they shall rest upon Mount Sion, when they shall sit with Him, and reign with Him.[8] "If you ask," saith Lactantius, "why God created the world, it was for no other cause but that man should be created; if you demand why man was created, it was because he should worship his Creator; if you inquire farther, why he should worship his Creator, it was for no other cause but that he should be rewarded by Him."[9] Lord, what was man, that Thou didst so respect him? This was the bowels of God's mercy, who had no other cause of his mercy but his mercy, no other end but his own glory and our good, which is called his most great and ample reward; wherein there is no end of his goodness, no number of his mercies, no measure of his wisdom, no depth of his bounty. So God doth deal like God Himself!

"If there were so great faith in earth as there

[8] Rev. vii. 9. [9] Lact. lib. 6. de Divin. Præm.

is reward looked for in heaven (saith Tertullian), merciful Lord, what love should we have to the life to come ?"[1] Pharaoh was content at last the people should go to do sacrifice, but they must leave their herds of cattle behind.[2] No ! Moses will not leave a hoof in Egypt : All our desires must go with us, in believing that high reward of blessedness so far above all human desert, that is, or may be. Seneca writeth that Alexander the Great, giving a poor man two talents, the man was so astonished with the greatness of the gift, as he answered the king, "Most princely Sir, I am not worthy to receive so much ;" to whom Alexander replied, "I do not respect, good man, what thou art meet to receive, but what beseems me, so great a potentate, for to give." God doth not so much regard what we, most unworthy creatures, are worthy to receive, as what becometh Him, the God of all mercy and magnificence, to bestow and give. Herod promised much when he promised half his kingdom[3]; but Christ, when He gives, we find Him giving a whole kingdom, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom."[4] Men are sometimes liberal in promising, but more niggardly in perform-

[1] Si tanta in terris moraretur fides, quanta merces expectatur in cœlis !—*Tertul. de Hab. Mul.*

[2] Exod. x. 24.

[3] Mark vi. 23.

[4] Matt. xxv. 34.

ing ; with God it is not so. Again, amongst men, the elder, or one only doth inherit ; but with God all sons are heirs, all heirs inherit ; and the inheritance too is a heavenly kingdom, to reign, to rejoice ever.[5] The meditation of this happy end of man, if man did know his own happiness, were enough to make him little respect a thousand worlds ; nay, to say, with the Prophet, "Like as the hart desireth the water streams ; so is my soul athirst for God. Oh! when shall I enter those courts of joy?"[6] Demetrius Phalereus, hearing the philosophers dispute about the immortality of the soul, "Wretched man that I am, (quoth he) who have so long lived in the perishing delights of this corruptible body!" We know not what we lose when we lose opportunity of seeking and buying that precious pearl, for which the provident husbandman should sell all that he hath.[7] When the people, as we read in the two-and-thirtieth of the book of Numbers, were come to their entrance into the land of promise, the children of Reuben and Gad, regarding not the promise so often promised, desired Moses that they might stay on the hither side of Jordan, because it was a place meet for their droves of cattle[8], which they more respected than their passage into the holy land. Are there

[5] Rom. viii. 17.
[6] Ps. xlii. 1, 2.
[7] Matt. xiii. 44.
[8] Num. xxxii. 3.

not some in the world, not far unlike these children of Reuben and Gad, who desire to make their stay here, and would go no farther, for that they esteem the pleasures and profits of a life temporal, more than they do the incomprehensible joys in that life eternal? But for the true Israelites all is weariness, until they come unto the land of rest. Whereas in other things (saith Cyprian) we are wont to blame it, yet in the expectation of so great a good, we may commend impatience.[9] "Woe is me," saith David, "that my pilgrimage is prolonged."

In things that are ordained unto an end, the rule and measure of all actions is taken from the same; which end is first in the intention and last in the execution. Now, if blessedness be man's end, then is it the mark we all shoot at, and the scope of all our enterprises whatsoever. Every thing is required for blessedness, and only blessedness for itself. Jacob's seven years' service seemed but light in regard of Rachel, for whom he served.[1] The labour and travail, not of seven years, but of all the years of our life, is nothing in respect of Rachel, the fairer, the happier state to come. And this doth answer the profane Atheist, and meet with the objection of Job's friends: "What good hath thy righteousness brought

[9] Cypr. de Mort.

[1] Gen. xxix. 28.

thee?" or as some would not blush to say in the time of the Prophet Malachi, "What profit is there by serving God?"[2] That most happy reward in the life to come, doth strike them all dumb; that very assistance in the life present, may make them amazed. "Do but try me, saith the Lord, if I will not pour out a blessing upon you." This blessing, say the ancient Fathers[3], is both of the way and of the country. That which God giveth in the way, is spoken of by the prophet David in the first Psalm, where, mentioning the state of him that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, He shall be blessed, saith the Prophet; and how? "Look, whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper."[4] So saith he of the man that feareth God, He shall be blessed; and wherein? "For he shall see his children's children, and peace upon Israel."[5] The world's manner is the Jews' manner, who were wont to bring the best wine first. Christ, He observes his own[6] manner, and keeps the best until the last.[7] It is said of Isidore, who, being at a great banquet, and there beholding a great sign of God's bounty towards the sons of men, suddenly he brake out into abundance of tears, and being demanded the cause why, "For that (quoth he) I here feed of earthly creatures that am created to live with angels:"

[2] Mal. iii. 14.
[3] Cyril de Fide ad Reg. Hil. de Unit. Pat. et Fil.
[4] Ps. i. 3. [5] Ps. cxxviii. 6. [6] ["old."] [7] John ii. 10.

as if the remembrance of the time to come did draw his affections, as it should do the affections of us all, to a comfortable expectation of the same. Our bodies walk on earth, but our souls should be in heaven, by our heavenly desires; and we should frame our affections in form of a ship that is close downward, but open upward, in a hearty desire of a superior condition: the remembrance whereof is like the message of the angel Gabriel, which brought tidings of great joy, which may make the faithful answer with Hezekiah, and say, "The word of God is good, let there be peace[8]," and that too peace eternal. "In the mean time," saith St. Austin, "let my mind muse of it, let my tongue mention it, let my heart love it, and my whole soul never cease to hunger and thirst after it."[9] O Lord God of hosts, blessed is the man that putteth his trust in Thee.[1]

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## CHAPTER VI.

*That we need not fear death, much less to meditate thereof.*

When Moses saw his rod turned into a serpent[2], it did at first somewhat affright him,

[8] Isaiah xxxviii. 9.
[1] Ps. lxxxiv. 12.
[9] Aug. Man. ult. cap.
[2] Exod. iv. 3.

for he began to step from it; but when once God commanded him to take hold thereof, he found afterward, by many effects, it did him and the people of God much good. At first sight, death doth fray our natural weakness, and we begin to shrink from it; but having confidence in God, who hath willed us not to fear, we find it a mean to divide the waters of many tribulations, to make us a passage from the wilderness of this world unto a better land of rest. 'Tis strange we should make so nice of ourselves, as to count it a death to meditate of death. Nay, to esteem the very remembrance thereof, as Ahab did the presence of the prophet Elijah, to be troublesome unto us.[3] Whereas death is so far from hurting them who put their trust in God, as they shall rather find it a gentle guide to bring them home to their own city, where they would be to remain for ever. That which we call life is a kind of death, because it makes us to die: but that which we count death, is in the sequel a very life, for that indeed it makes us to live. There is a death, which some call mortal sin, and this is the death of the soul; which death we should all fear. There is also a moderate fear of the other death, which is profitable to withdraw us from the allure-

[3] 1 Kings xviii. 17.

ments of evil. But so to fear it, as if it were the utter ruin and overthrow of all our being, we need not, we ought not. When the apostle St. Paul spake of the unconquerable faith, which was his stay, and the stay of all them whose hope was in Christ: "We (saith the apostle) know, that if this earthly house of our tabernacle be destroyed, we have a building, not made with hands, but given of God, eternal in the heavens."[4] As if he would tell the persecutors of his time, that miseries for a moment could not dismay them; the perishing of the outward man could not daunt them; nor present death could discourage them; for they knew their habitation was in heaven, and themselves incorporated citizens into that Jerusalem, which is above. A heathen man could say, "Fear is a proof of a degenerate mind[5];" this abject fear is far dissident from a generous offspring. Solomon saith, "the just is as a lion;" of whom the naturalist writeth, that he is of such courage, as being fiercely pursued, he will never once alter his gait, though he die for it. With what constancy answered the second of those seven brethren, who all yielded up manfully themselves to torment, for the maintenance of the law of God: "Thou, O king, takest these our lives from us; but the King of heaven shall raise us up,

[4] 2 Cor. v. 1.

[5] Degeneres animos timor arguit.—Virg. iv. 1. 3

in the resurrection of everlasting life!"[6] The philosopher might say, "of things terrible, none more than death."[7] But it is otherwise with Christians. Tertullian told the persecutors of his time, "that their cruelty did but open a door to God's distressed people, whereby they might enter the sooner into a state of glory: and therefore death was very acceptable to them."[8] "Why should I fear (saith the prophet) in the evil day?"[9] As if David saw no cause of dreading death, howsoever nature may begin to tremble at the mention thereof. Hilarion could not but wonder his soul should be so loth to depart, after he had served God, and God him, so many years.[1] Consider death as in itself, and so naturally we fear it: consider death as a mean to bring us unto Christ, willingly we may embrace it. When Jacob saw the chariots of Egypt, and thereby perceived his son Joseph was alive, his fainting spirits revived, saying, "I will go see him before I die."[2] When faith doth bring us many testimonies, our Joseph liveth; the Christian soul may comfort herself in her pangs, and say, In the name of God, to see him, let me die.

Now for these corruptible bodies, they take no damage at all by death. 'Tis no harm to the seed, though it hath, for the

[6] 2 Mac. vii. 9.
[7] Aris. Eth. lib. 3.
[8] Tert. in Apol.
[9] Psalm xlix. 5.
[1] Hier. de Vit. Hilar.
[2] Gen. xlv. 28.

time, a little earth raked over it: it shall spring again, and flourish, and bring forth fruit in due season. No hurt is it to these our bodies, to be cast into the ground: "being sown in weakness, they shall rise again in power: being sown natural bodies, they rise again bodies spiritual: being sown in dishonour, they rise again in glory."[3] The keeping green of Noah's olive-tree under the flood; the budding again of Aaron's rod[4]; the deliverance of Jonah from the depth of the sea[5]; the voice that calleth, "Come again, ye children of men[6];" the hope of Job, that he should see God, with no other but with the selfsame eyes[7]; the prophecy of Ezekiel unto the dry bones, that should come bone to bone[8]; may stir in us a joyful hope, and cheer us up against all the fear and terror of death. But the resurrection of our Saviour Christ, that is the comfort of all comforts, "The voice of Christ is by Christ the voice of Christians[9]," saith St. Austin. Death, where is thy sting? Hell, where is thy victory? As He was the cause efficient, so was He also a figure of the resurrection. He rising, we all arise. Of a more powerful cause, there is a more powerful effect. If the sin of Adam, who was a living soul, was the cause that

[3] 1 Cor. xv. 43. [4] Num. xvii. 8. [5] Jonah ii. 10.
[6] Ps. xc. 3. [7] Job xix. 27. [8] Ezek. xxxvii. 7.
[9] Vox Christi, vox Christianorum.

death reigned over all, much more the resurrection of Christ, who was a quickening Spirit, shall be of power to raise up all that believe to the hope of everlasting life.[1] What greater joy than to be able to know Him, as the apostle speaketh, and the power of his resurrection?[2] Christ has, in dying, showed what we should suffer; so, in rising from death, what we should hope. To wit, that all the bones in Golgotha shall rise[3]; and those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall hear the voice of Christ to Lazarus, "Come forth."[4] Wherefore, though death doth swallow us up, as the whale did Jonah, bind us, as the Philistines did Samson, yet we shall come forth, and break the bands, as the bird out of the snare. The snare is broken, and we are delivered. They may well fear death, saith St. Cyprian, that have no faith in Christ: but for those who are members of that Head, who vanquished the power of hell and death, death is to them advantage, and a gentle guide, that brings them home to everlasting rest. Hence is it, that dying, they are said, since Christ's resurrection, to fall asleep. They that sleep in Jesus, saith the apostle, they lay them down and take their rest[5]; and God it is that makes them dwell in everlasting safety. We should not then fear to fall

[1] Rom. v. 14. [2] Phil. iii. 10. [3] Dan. xii. 2.
[4] John xi. 43. [5] 1 Thess. iv. 13.

asleep, for sleep is a refreshing after wearisome labours. The painful labouring man, after his day's work ended, sleeps often more quietly than Dives, in his marble palace, on his bed of ivory, where he tosseth and tumbleth; he sleeps not quietly, either in life or death, and of such is that verified, "O death, how bitter is thy remembrance!"[6] "Having wearied themselves," saith the wise man, "in the way of wickedness, they shall cry out, What hath pride profited us, or the pomp of riches brought us?"[7] Surely this barren and light land, after all our drudgery, yields no other but a crop of cares, trouble, fear, and vexation of mind. When those that have laboured in the vineyard, and have been often in watching, in fasting often, these rest from their labours, and fall asleep to rise again with their bodies, when the Sun of Righteousness shall appear in everlasting glory. Of these, the apostle saith, "I would not have you sorrow as men without hope, for those that are asleep." How acceptable, therefore, may death be, when in dying we sleep, and in sleeping we rest from all the travails of a toilsome life!

Again, whereas death is a tribute, we must all pay homage. Let us make that voluntary, which is necessary, and yield it

[6] Ecclus. xli. 1. [7] Wisd. v. 8.

to God as a gift, which we stand bound to pay as a due debt.[8] Had we no further hope than only to obtain a state temporal, we might fear, indeed, because, when we die, all our happiness shall deceive us; but when God made man of the dust of the ground, God breathed into him the breath of life, and man was made a living soul[9], therefore not a dying soul.

Cæsar writeth, that the bare opinion of the Druids, who taught that the souls had a continuance after their separation from their bodies, made many of their followers hardy in great attempts, and abated in most the fear of death.[1] Cyrus himself could say unto his children, when he was ready to die, "Think not, dear children, that I shall be nowhere or nothing." If a bare supposal of a future being could so much avail against the fear of death, what doth faith effect, that doth warrant us, by good evidence, of the blessed assurance of the resurrection? If Abraham, the faithful patriarch, left his own country and kindred, at the commandment of Almighty God, and went into a strange land[2], how willingly should we leave this country, wherein we are only strangers, and

[8] Chrys. Homil. 10, in Matt.
[9] Gen. ii. 7.
[2] Gen. xii. 4.
[1] Cæs. lib. 6. de Bel. Gal.

go where we have our own home, and abode for ever! This was the resolution of St. Ambrose, who neither loathed life, nor feared to die, because, saith he, we have a good Lord. This was the faith of Simeon, who, having seen Christ, prayed to depart in peace.[3] This was St. Paul's gain, when he said, "to die is to me advantage[4]:" because this passage was a dissolution, and this dissolution was to be from the body; and this his being from the body was to be with Christ.

Seeing therefore that death itself, being duly considered, should nothing at all dismay us, then much less the meditation thereof. The more we meditate of death, the less we fear it; the less we fear it, the more faith have we. "What shall separate us from the love of God that is in Christ? shall tribulation or anguish? shall life or death?"[5] "Blessed be God," saith St. Peter, "who hath begotten us to a lively hope of the resurrection."[6]

[3] Luke ii. 29. [4] Phil. i. 21. [5] Rom. viii. 35.
[6] 1 Pet. i. 3.

## CHAPTER VII.

*That the afflictions of mind, which are incident in the life of man, may move him to a meditation of his end.*

Solomon (whom God, for wisdom, chose, as it were, to be a foreman of a great inquest, to make inquiry of the state of the world, to come forth, to speak for all and his conscience of all), having heard and seen the nature of things under the sun, yields up his verdict of all as thus: "All is vanity and vexation of mind."[1] This is, in brief, the condition of all in general. The rich discontented in honours, the poor languishing in grief, the learned full of restless labours, all, of what estate soever, subject unto troubles and vexation of mind. As if Solomon should have said, you may look for no other, all is vexation. Small cause had the Israelites to care for their continuance amongst the taskmasters of Egypt; and as small cause have any to desire to live in this wilderness, amongst many wolves. We know Christ our Saviour hath told us, that "being in the world, we are not of the world."[2] Here we may not look for perfect rest of body, or all content-

[1] Eccles. ii. 11. [2] John xv. 19.

ment of mind, and, therefore to meditate of deliverance, may be some refreshing to the distressed soul, who may pour out her complaints, saying, Would to God that day might once shine, when I shall see my Redeemer; when I shall come where is peace within and without; when I shall appear before the presence of God with joy, and be no more oppressed with griefs, disturbed with cares, molested with thoughts, but live and rest for ever. What comfort can a man reap, or what quiet should he take, where want is miserable, plenty full of peril? Which way soever we cast our eyes, we find cause of complaint, that we may well count laughter error[3], and subscribe to that of the prophet: "Lord, thy terrors have I suffered from my youth upward, with a troubled mind."[4]

Having then so little cause to joy in this life, where there is so small a cause to make us rejoice, where the mind is so invested with cares, and molested with griefs, we may recount with ourselves the happiness of them, who after the storms of this troublesome sea, have cast anchor in their safest road. Noah had much molestation in the old world; he had the waters swelling under him, the heavens dark and gloomy over him; at last the ark stayed upon the mountains of Ararat[5],

[3] Eccles. ii. 2. [4] Ps. lxxxviii. 15.
[5] Gen. viii. 4.

and then was Noah a glad man. Lot was grieved amongst the sinful Sodomites ; at last, God sent his angels to take him clean away.[6] Elijah mourned for a time, sat under a juniper-tree[7], sent up his sighs to heaven ; at last came the chariot, and then there was no more Jezebel to persecute him, no more false prophets to band themselves against him. The saints under the altar may for a time cry, "How long, Lord Jesus !"[8] After a little more sufferings, their disgrace shall be turned into glory, their mournful tears into gladsome triumph. "Why art thou so vexed, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me ? O put thy trust in God."[9] "In the multitude of my sorrows (saith the same prophet) that were in my heart, thy comforts (Lord) have refreshed my soul."[1] Thereby showing, that as the world had a multitude of sorrows to assault his heart, so God had a multitude of comforts to refresh his soul amongst them all. For "as our sufferings in Christ do abound, so our consolations also in Christ do abound too[2]," saith St. Paul.

Our Saviour, knowing that his apostles should have many and great discomforts in the world, promiseth to send them, after his

[6] Gen. xix. 17.
[7] 1 Kings xix. 5.
[8] Rev. vi. 10.
[9] Ps. xlii. 11.
[1] Ps. xciv. 19.
[2] 2 Cor. i. 5.

ascension up into heaven, another Comforter[3]; for his presence was their comfort; and afterward, in their deepest prisons, they should have the Holy Ghost their fellow-prisoner; and howsoever the world did outwardly annoy them, yet they should inwardly have a Comforter to make them rejoice in their sufferings, and after all to rejoice for ever. Now therefore, though the burden be heavy, yet a lightsomeness it is to remember the way is not long. When the apprentice calls to mind that his years of covenant will now shortly expire, and that then he shall have his freedom confirmed, the remembrance thereof maketh many laboursome works seem more light and less grievous unto him. The poor traveller, in thinking of his inn, goes on more cheerfully in his painful journey. The bondman, in calling to mind the year of jubilee, is wont with more patience to go through the years of bondage. Now then, amidst the sundry afflictions that grieve the mind, a meditation of our end may much mitigate, if not altogether take away, the greatest sorrows of all. "Many are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of all[4]," and taketh either sorrows from them, or them from sorrows. Great are their trials, but salvation will one day make

[3] John xiv. 16. [4] Ps. xxxiv. 19.

amends; when they shall have all tears wiped from their eyes, and their reward by so much the more joyous, by how much the more the course of their life hath been grievous unto them. Seeing, therefore, that on every side we have such urgent occasion to pass the days of this wearisome pilgrimage in trouble and pensiveness of mind, may we not think them thrice blessed, who are now landed on the shore of perfect security, and delivered from the burden of so toilsome a labour? May we not be refreshed in calling to mind that this battle will one day be at an end, and we freed from the throes of all these bitter calamities? Well may we weep and mourn, as Job, and Jeremiah, in consideration of our entrance into this vale of tears; and often may we muse with gladness of the time of our departure. After all sorrows, and those threatening voices, a voice will come from the throne, when the vial of the seventh angel shall be poured out[5], and will say, Now all is done: though God do begin with, "I have afflicted thee," He would surely end with, "I will afflict thee no more."[6]

[5] Rev. xvi. 17. [6] Nahum i. 12.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*That the griefs of body may also move us to enter into this serious meditation of our end.*

When the prophet Daniel saw what was, and in all likelihood (unless God set to his helping hand in time) what still would be the estate of the people, while they were in the thraldom of Babylon, he thought more and more of his and their deliverance, and besought God to look upon the desolation of his people, and to "show mercy for his mercies' sake, in ridding them from all."[1] When we see, and feel, what is, and still will be, the condition of this our Babylon, griefs of body, and afflictions of mind; we may in our highest devotion to God, call to mind the time of dismission and our good delivery from all. Yea, we may consider, that there will come a day, when these crazed bodies, subject to several infirmities, as the head to megrims, the lungs to suffocations, the joints to gouts, the stronger parts themselves to convulsions; when these bodies, I say, which have holpen to bear the burden of the day, shall, with the

[1] Dan. ix. 18.

happy soul, live together and rejoice together. In the mean season, we may remember in all these infirmities, that of the prophet, "The Lord will not fail his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance."[2] David knew it was God's manner to try his servants; he therefore in his afflictions made this protestation of himself and them, "Though all this come upon us, yet will we not forsake thee."[3] It is our Isaac's use, first to feel us by tribulation, and then to bless us: by these infirmities of the body, we may consider God's feeling. Now, after we have suffered a little, then "Take a blessing, my son."[4] Though the wind blow cold, yet doth it cleanse the good grain; though the fire burn hot, yet it purifieth the best gold. Afflictions are both sufferings and instructions. For these afflictions do often cause an utter contempt of all worldly pleasure, humbleness of mind, penitency, and sorrow of heart for sins past.

In the hundred and seven and thirtieth Psalm, the people's captivity is thus mentioned: "By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept:" in the verse following, "As for our harps, we hanged them up, upon the trees that are there nigh."[5] We sat

[2] Ps. xciv. 14.
[3] Ps. xliv. 17.
[4] Gen. xxvii. 23.
[5] Ps. cxxxvii. 1, 2.

down,—a token of their humility; And wept, —a sign of sorrow and penitency; As for our harps, we hanged them up,—which showed they were now very far from mirth and melody. All the life of Solomon was full of prosperity, and therefore we find that Solomon did much forget God; but the whole life of David hath much adversity, and therefore we see by his penitential Psalms, and others, that David did much remember God. These chastisements of the body in particular, as they are (in the consequent) means oftentimes of our good (for the worser part of man, saith St. Jerome, is sometimes punished, which is the body, that the better part of man, to wit the soul, in the day of judgment may be saved), so are they, in the cause, effects of God's love. For though He be at times a chastening Father, yet a Father; though a lancing Physician, yet a Physician; and therefore one that loves and that cures. We need no more but lay open our griefs, and let Him alone with the salving, who knows better than ourselves how best to treat us[6]; though the potion be sharp, yet it is his, whose intent is to do us good, whose love in chastening we may not refuse. Chrysostom could say, A great temptation is it, not to be tempted at all.

[6] [Edit. 1600 reads "to ounce us."]

Job was a righteous man by the testimony of Him whose testimony was most true. "What sayest thou to my servant Job, an upright man and just man, one that feareth God?"[7] The next news we hear of him, Job is afflicted in body, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. You have heard (saith St. James) of the patience of Job, and what end God made with him.[8] The holy man was tempted, that when we are tried, to teach us what we should do. St. Jerome, having read the life and death of Hilarion, who after he had lived religiously, died most Christianly, said, Well, Hilarion shall be the champion whom I will follow. If St. Jerome could say, Hilarion should be the champion whom he would follow; if chaste men may say, Joseph shall be the champion whom we will follow; then may afflicted men say, for true patience, Job shall be the champion whom we will follow. Tobit, after that deed of mercy in burying the dead, was accepted of God.[9] The next tidings we hear of Tobit is, the holy man Tobit is stricken blind. To suffer some chastisements we may be content, for respecting our sins, God, by these afflictions, doth lay but a soft hand upon us. It was an ancient father's Prayer, "Lord, here scar and cut me, that Thou mayest heal me

[7] Job i. 8. [8] James v. 11. [9] Tob. ii. 7.

in the time to come;" better to suffer here than hereafter. "Respect not so much (saith Chrysostom) that the way is painful, as that the end thereof is pleasant."[1]

When St. John asked the angel what they were that appeared in long white garments, with palms in their hands, the angel answered, "These are those that came out of many tribulations in the world[2];" to show, after the storms of a troublesome life, they wear palms and crowns, in token of everlasting triumph. There is a threefold consideration, that may move in us matter of meditation to this effect. The first, What we once were; the second, What we now are; the third, What after a short space we shall be. What we once were, is shown by that of Esdras, O Adam (saith he), what hast thou done?[3] When Adam fell, we all fell. If the estate of man had been without sin, man's estate had been as the angels' in heaven. Solomon, in his princely seat, was clothed in great royalty; and yet Solomon, in all his royalty, was not clothed like the lilies of the field. But neither was Solomon in all his royalty, nor were the lilies of the field, ever so clothed as was Adam, before he lost the clothing of innocency. O happy Adam, if Adam had well considered so much! Wherefore, as the

[1] Chrys. Hom. 7. in Ep. ad Heb.
[2] Rev. vii. 14. [3] 2 Esd. vii. 48.

people in the time of the prophet Haggai, beholding the form of the temple, how far inferior it was unto the former glory thereof, might in effect sorrow, when they saw the one, and remembered the other[4]: in like manner, when we call to mind the state of innocency, wherein God made all things for man, and man for himself (in that wonderful excellency), placed him in Paradise, a garden of all delights, subject neither to grief of body, nor vexation of mind, we cannot but with some sorrow for sin bethink ourselves of that former felicity, and in the first place, what we once were. For the second consideration, What we now are, even sojourners in this vale of tears, exiles from our native home; where troubles come like Job's messengers, no sooner one hath told his tale, but another steps in to say as much; where men are beset with crosses and calamities round about; the feeling whereof may move us to break forth into that desire of the Apostle, "Who shall deliver us from these bodies of death?"[5] Cato the wise, a heathen man, could tell his scholars, that were he offered to be young again, he would in no case accept of such an offer; so wearisome is the condition of our estate present. For that future state, What we shall be, when

[4] Hag. ii. 3. [5] Rom. vii. 24.

these drossy bodies shall be changed, and made like the glorious body of the Son of God.[6] To which bodies God in mercy saith, as sometimes unto Abraham, "For Ishmael, I will bless him also;" so of these bodies in their resurrection, though as Ishmael they are not so freeborn as Isaac, the soul, yet shall they have a blessing too. A Christian remembrance hereof doth make us desire, with longing, a perfection elsewhere. "Hope (saith Solomon) that is deferred, doth afflict the mind."[7]

In the mean season, considering that God is at the last the rewarder of patience, and death the finisher of pain, it may make us the more cheerful to pass over the greatest griefs of body and afflictions of mind whatsoever, which afflictions in this life are testimonies of God's love, but in the life to come, signs of his justice. It is the wont of fathers to hold in their own children, when they suffer the children of bondmen to go loosely as they list; God that keeps an inheritance for his, after his rod in correcting, He hath a staff of stay and comfort. Wherefore we may reckon these trials as harbingers to warn us beforehand of death's coming, as testimonies of God's care over us, as schoolmasters towards our end, to teach us this

[6] Phil. iii. 21. [7] Prov. xiii. 12.

lesson of Learning to Die. If God (saith St. Jerome) had promised us all peace and quiet, both in this world and in the world to come, then our troubles here might amaze us, and make us doubt of our future rest; but finding by proof the manifold tribulations of the life present, we may expect with comfort the promise of the time to come.[8] If a heathen man could say, when he saw a sudden shipwreck of all his worldly wealth, all lost in a moment, Well, Fortune, I see thy intent, thou wouldest have me be a philosopher; how much more may the Christian man say, after the many and manifold afflictions in mind and body, Well, I see that God would have me even to become religious, and to enter into a meditation of the life that is freed of all.

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## CHAPTER IX.

*How much it concerneth every one in the time of health, to prepare himself for the day of his dissolution.*

SEEING that our good or bad estate in the life to come depends much upon the quality or condition of the life present, (for "where the tree falleth there it lieth[9]") and our passage in order is from the life of grace, unto the life

[8] Hier. de Consol. in Advers. [9] Eccl. xi. 3.

of glory; they see but little, that perceive not how greatly it concerneth every Christian, in time of best health, while he hath yet day before him, to set forward in a provident course, that so, in the cool of the evening, he may arrive at the port of everlasting rest. "The days of man are but short, his time uncertain; that little moment we have to provide for a state of all continuance is run over before we are aware: God's mercy, in giving us time and grace, passeth along as a pleasant river; if we stop the course thereof by our continuance in sin, it will arise high and turn into justice, and bear down by force, and overthrow our securest repose in this world." That which once, and never but once, is done, should be advisedly begun, carefully prosecuted, and most seriously laboured with all industry unto the end. It is the counsel of the Holy Ghost, Do good while ye have time.[1] The place of making atonement with our adversary is while we are in the way[2]: No preparing oil in our lamps, no entering with the bridegroom[3]: no running, no crowning. For a sure rule is it with God, Do well, and have well. Live the life of the righteous, and die the death of the righteous. If any ask, (saith Lactantius) whether death be good or evil, my answer is, Look unto the condition of

[1] Gal. vi. 10. [2] Matt. v. 25. [3] Matt. xxv. 8.

the life present, which if it be passed over in virtue, O well is thee and happy shalt thou be[4]; if otherwise, the case is altered, The death of sinners is worst of all: for why? they pass over their days, saith Job, in great jollity, and suddenly fall into a sea of miseries.[5] Because we know not the day, we should watch every day; because we know not the hour, we should watch every hour. We see that in matters of weight, foresight and deliberation is wont to bring them better to pass. The husbandman will take his season, the soldier will watch the fittest time, every one will cast the best way to compass the business he hath in hand; and shall the Christian man be altogether careless and negligent in preparing himself for his departure? God forbid. It is the wise man's wise counsel, Before thy languishing grief, consult of the medicine; before judgment, examine thyself. The prophet David, expressing the provident care and careful providence of an holy man, saith, He shall pray unto thee in a time convenient, or, remember thee, O Lord, in a time when thou mayest be found.[6] The servants that said in their hearts, The master doth defer his coming; the master of those servants shall come in a time they think not of, and give them their portion where shall be weeping

[4] Ps. cxxviii. 2. [5] Job xxi. 13. [6] Ps. xxxii. 6.

and gnashing of teeth. But happy are those servants who attend his return; these are those that make all clean and handsome, these are those that sometimes look forth, sit as Abraham at the entrance of the tabernacle; these are those who have their loins girt, their lamps burning, their oil ready, and wait with the wise virgins for the Bridegroom's coming; these are those whom their Lord shall find so doing, and therefore make them rulers over much, take them by the hands and bring them to the participation of everlasting joy. That men would well prepare themselves in time, while they are their own men! They shall one day find the benefit of this carefulness. To him that passeth through dark places, one light carried before him will do him more good than many that are brought after. For him that undertaketh a long journey, advice beforehand will stand him in stead. Of this spiritual voyage, the vow of the Prophet should be the vow and resolution of every particular man, by the assistance of God's grace: I said I will take heed unto my ways.[7] A religious preparation in time would do men more good than they are aware. Christ wept for the men of Jerusalem[8], which would not weep for themselves, and all was because they knew not the things that did

[7] Ps. xxxix. 1. [8] Luke xix. 41.

belong unto their peace. Antiochus, after his many injuries offered unto the people of the Jews and unto the temple of God itself, taking sacrilegiously from thence the ornaments appointed for God's service, when the Lord called him to answer the cause at his own consistory, he could then wish he had never meddled with sacred goods, only consecrated to the Church, to godly uses.[9] When Pharaoh saw the sea ready to swallow him, he could then no doubt be sorry that ever he had wronged poor innocents, and oppressed God's own portion. When sleep is gone from their eyes, and rest from their tossed beds, then many may wish that they had used less oppression than they have; that they had fasted often with the apostle[1], prayed with Daniel[2], wept with Mary Magdalen[3], lived in mean estate, and so have feared God, rather than to have enjoyed the pleasures of sin for a season, which they find to be full of bitterness at the last. These things should be considered in time, and here is the time. They shall seek me (saith Wisdom, speaking of negligent sinners), but they shall not find me: and why? because they seek when it is too late.[4] The foolish virgins may call, "Lord, Lord[5];" but when the Bridegroom is passed, and that mild

[9] 1 Mac. vi. 12, 13. [1] 2 Cor. xi. 27. [2] Dan. ix. 21. [3] Luke vii. 38. [4] Prov. i. 28. [5] Matt. xxv. 11, 12.

countenance of Christ turned away, the woful plight of these virgins shall be such as it were enough to break their hearts with sorrow, and such sorrow which shall never cease to wound their very distressed souls.

Had we not need then, in a case of such importance, to stand evermore ready by a serious preparation for our end: "To hold us fast in the fear of God, and to wax old therein[6]," as Sirach counselleth us? Moreover, this our continuance here being only certain in uncertainty, therefore saith one, "In any case let our uncertain condition put into us a certain carefulness of our estate to come."[7] If in any thing that care of the Prophet is to be remembered, who would not suffer his eyes to sleep nor the temples of his head to take any rest[8], it should surely in this of all other be remembered. Who would pass a day in sinful security? who would lay him down in that state of life wherein he would be loth to depart this tabernacle? Do not many meet with death, and are often surprised at places of greatest triumph, where men are wont to think of nothing less; now merry, within short time mourned for? a bone in the meat, a husk in the cup; the laying wait of an

[6] Ecclus. ii. 6.
[7] Eus. Em. Hom. I. ad Mona.
[8] Ps. cxxxii. 4.

enemy, hath made many a stout champion, after manifest perils escaped in the midst of the hateful enemies, to yield by so weak a means, whether they would or no. Many good friends oftentimes in the world shake hands at parting, and we see their next meeting is at heaven. Wherefore when we keep our solemn assemblies, we had need keep them religiously minded: for we know not whether we shall ever keep them any more. When we make our humble repentance to God, we had need do it sincerely indeed. Satan he is busy, because his time is short, and therefore his wrath is the fiercer; but we, remembering the continuance of time, should use all diligence, and therefore our care should be the greater to prevent the subtle serpent. The Church doth pray, and that in most Christian manner too, that the faithful may be delivered from sudden death. And surely great cause hath the sober Christian man to desire rather leisurely to yield himself to God, than to be taken in a moment from the society of men. To have a good departure out of the world, may be a good man's prayer; and to close up the course of life with a treatable dissolution, is that fair Christian end we may all beg at the hands of God. Notwithstanding, when the mind is well prepared, and every day resigned to his will, who knoweth better than ourselves how

best to bring us to his kingdom, though the Christian end the days of his transitory life by a more short riddance from these bodily infirmities, the suddenness, with God's help, is no prejudice unto his future good, that lives ever prepared for the day of his departure: and they are not overtaken with death, how suddenly soever they are gone, that daily mind the time of their dissolution. We may remember, that if we respect our estate and condition of life, we are all at one and the selfsame stay; "Consider (saith St. Bernard) not so much what thou art, as what thou shalt be."[9] What is become of all Adam's posterity for these many hundred years past? excepting a remnant, that must shortly follow after, are they not all gone? Moses, mentioning the age of those who lived before the flood, (when as yet the days of man were of more continuance than they are,) saith, "All the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died." "All the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died." "All the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died[1];" that same, "and he died," will ere long be the clause applicable to us all. In the mean season we read the epitaphs of

[9] Considera non qualis sis, sed qualis fueris.—*Bern. de Consid. ad Eug.* lib. 3.

[1] Gen. v. 8, 20, 27.

others, follow the funerals of some dear friends; we see many, as those on whom the tower in Siloah fell[2]; gone in a moment; warnings sufficient, if warnings will serve to make us live prepared for our end. Careless men (saith one) are not unlike dissolute servitors in princes' courts, who having their allowance of lights, spend them out in riot, and so at last are fain to go to bed darkling: provident Christians have a foresight to think of the time to come, consider this transitory estate will have an end, and therefore prepare for another world, where they may have a stay or perpetuity of rest. Now then, to be ever in a readiness for the giving up our account to God, to live prepared for the day of death, the uncertainty of life, the weightiness of the charge may justly move us all to be careful indeed.[3] How much, therefore, it concerneth us in time of health to provide for another world, every one doth see; we have not two souls, that we may hazard one. God willed his people, upon their passage out of Egypt, "to have their loins girt, their staves in their hands, their shoes on their feet[4]," that there might be no let when the time of their delivery should come: we know not how soon God will send us from this Egypt; Jesus Christ grant we may keep our passovers with

[2] Luke xiii. 4. [3] Luke xvi. 3. [4] Exod. xii. 12.

souls prepared to be gone! "Whoso feareth the Lord, (saith the wise man,) it shall go well with him at the last, and he shall find favour in the day of his death."[1]

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## CHAPTER X.

*Wherein is shown the manner of preparing, or the state and condition of life, wherein the Christian man should stand prepared for death.*

THE mean, then, to die the death of the righteous, is first to live the life of the righteous. The mean to sit with Abraham is here to walk with Abraham; for God hath appointed a virtuous life to go in order before the great reward of eternal life, not as the cause, but as the consequent of our blessed righteousness in Christ our Saviour. What remaineth, but to frame the premises as we would find the conclusion; to sow as we would one day reap? for those that will lie soft must make their bed thereafter, and to live the life we hope to live, is in a generality here to live religiously. The old Christians made the world to read in their lives what they did believe in their hearts, and heathen men to say, "This is a good God, whose servants are so

[1] Ecclus. i. 13.

good.[2] Therefore, then, this godly and holy conversation of life, what better state for a Christian man to stand in, ever prepared for his end? Was not that a memorable protestation of Samuel, when, before his death, in the presence of all the people, he declared as thus, his integrity of life? "Behold, here I am, bear record of me before the Lord and his anointed." As if he should have said, Give me my "acquittance[3]" at parting. "Whose ox have I taken? to whom have I done wrong?" The people's reply in effect was, Now God be with thee, good Samuel, to whom thou art going; and so with mournful hearts they gave him this testimony at parting.[4] That of St. Paul, when he took his farewell of the men of Ephesus, who wept abundantly for the words he spake, being chiefly sorry they should see his face no more. "I take you to record this day, I am pure from the blood of all men; I have coveted no man's silver or gold."[5] After so good a life, was not this a good farewell? That of Simeon, a just man, one that feared God, and waited for the consolation of Israel, who embracing Christ, prayed to depart in peace?[6] O good life, (saith an ancient Father,) what a joy art thou in time of distress![7] It made the same

[2] Just. Mart. [3] Quietus est. [4] 1 Sam. xii. 3.
[5] Acts xx. 26, 27. [6] Luke ii. 29. [7] Poss. de Amb.

Father neither ashamed to live any longer, because he had lived honestly; nor afraid to die, because he had a good Lord. Plutarch writeth of Pericles, that he never caused men to wear sorrowful attire, he was so harmless[8]; and of Lysander, that he was more honoured after his death, than ever he had been in all his life, he was so virtuous.[9] But the wise man, speaking of the servants of God, who passed through the darkness of this world with lamps in their lives, which did both light themselves and others; "The righteous (saith he) are had in a perpetual remembrance, their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth for evermore."[1] For such is the power of virtue, as it makes men not only honoured when they are alive, but also when they are dead; and it is wont to take them out of their graves, and cause them to live in the mention of long posterity, having their names registered and enrolled with the saints of heaven. These stood evermore upon their departure, having that heavenly treasure of a good conscience, having peace and tranquillity of mind. When the evil are tossed, saith the prophet Isaiah, as the raging waves of the sea, their name perisheth, saith the Wise Man, as if they had never been. Thus the inno-

[8] Plut. in vit. Peric.
[9] Plut. in vit. Lysand.
[1] Ecclus. xliv. 14.

cent life, like the watchful servant, openeth the door gladly, when his master knocketh; but the riotous seeketh corners, being ashamed to be seen: the one is quit by a joyful proclamation, the other found guilty at the bar of his own conscience. He that will say with the Apostle, "Death is to me advantage[2]," must live with the Apostle, "with all good conscience."[3]

Thus much in general of preparing ourselves for the time of our dissolution: in particular to come nearer home, the applying of himself to Faith, Hope, and Charity, is that Christian estate wherein the servant of God once settled, need not to fear "to speak with his enemies in the gate."[4]

Faith is the staff whereupon we stay both in life and death, the which faith tells us that God through Christ is become our welfare. By faith we are blessed[5]; by faith we rejoice in tribulation[6]; by faith we have access unto God.[7] This is the shield whereby we quench the fiery darts of Satan, this is the mean whereby we resist his power.[8] Nahash, the Ammonite, would make peace with the men of Jabesh-Gilead[9], but upon condition that he might thrust out their right eyes. This old

[2] Phil. i. 21. [3] Acts xxiii. 1, 2. [4] Ps. cxxviii. 5.
[5] Gal. iii. 9. [6] Rom. v. 2. [7] Eph. iii. 12.
[8] Eph. vi. 16. [9] 1 Sam. xi. 2—4.

Ammonite, our enemy, would offer peace to God's children, but it is upon condition; for he would have their right eye, or that blessed faith that beholds Christ crucified, put out. But will the true Gileadites yield to such a condition? No, not for ten thousand worlds of riches. Have we any thing to do at the throne of God in heaven? there we have but two pleas, the one of innocency, the other of mercy. Faith bids boldly plead the plea of mercy, and tells us the Judge is reconciled. What shall separate us, once confirmed in faith, from the Love of God in Christ Jesus[1]? "Shall powers, or principalities? things present, or things to come?"[2] No, neither life nor death. What manner of faith Christ commendeth in the gospel, we read by that of Mary Magdalen, who after sorrowing and weeping for her sins, Christ tells her, "Thy faith hath made thee whole[3];" as if He should have said, Mary, this weeping, this repenting faith, is faith indeed. When He had seen the religious duty of the Samaritan that came back to give God praise, and fell down at Christ's feet, He saith unto him also, "Thy faith hath made thee whole[4];" as if this humble faith, this religious faith, is a saving faith; "Go in peace." The blind man that cried, "Son of David, have mercy upon me[5]," and

[1] Rom. v. 1. [2] Rom. viii. 38. [3] Luke vii. 50.
[4] Luke xvii. 19. [5] Luke xviii. 42.

being reproved would not leave mercy until he obtained mercy, Christ said to him as to the former, "Thy faith hath made thee whole;" as if [He had said], "This praying faith of thine is a good faith; receive thy sight." What made many old saints to endure bonds and imprisonment, to be stoned, to be hewn asunder? It was faith[6] (saith the Apostle). This was no palsy faith, but firm and constant unto the end, that comforts the languishing mind, and says, "If we live, we live unto the Lord, if we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."[7]

To this faith is adjoined Hope, which is called by the Holy Ghost the anchor of the soul. The anchor lieth deep, and is not seen, and yet is the stay of all. So hope reacheth far, is of things unseen, and yet holds sure amidst the surging waves of a boisterous world[8]; "this hope maketh not ashamed, abideth with patience, rejoiceth in afflictions[9]," is, as St. Austin called it, the very life of life. For why? it bids us go comfortably to the throne of grace[1], and not to refuse the changing of these mortal bodies; that we may receive them in a better resurrection.

In the third place, Charity, the indivisible companion of faith, may be considered; God in the creation did separate light from dark-

[6] Heb. xi. 37. [7] Rom. xiv. 8. [8] Heb. vi. 19.
[9] Rom. v. 5. [1] Heb. iv. 16.

ness ; we may not, in the state of justification, join the works of darkness, as envyings[2], strife, and contentions, with the light of faith. In the second book of Kings, and the tenth chapter, when Jehonadab came towards Jehu, as if he had some earnest intent to be his follower, "Jehu said, Is thy heart upright with mine ? He answered, It is. Then, quoth Jehu, Give me thy hand." Our noble Jehu, whom God hath set up to pull down the power of darkness, says to all who would profess his name : Is your faith upright to me ? then give me the operations of your hands. The children of God, as they shall differ from the children of this world hereafter, so must they differ from them here by good works, which do manifest themselves by Christian charity. Christ says unto his, as the lord of the vineyard said unto them in the market-place, Why stand ye idle[3]? Faith, like Rachel mourning for her children, lamenteth the defect of good works : and saith as Sarah, Give me fruit or I die. Our Saviour Christ saith to his disciples, By this shall men know you, whose you are, in that you love one another.[4] Cain offered bad offerings, which was a token that the love of God waxed cold in Cain ; it was not long after that he laid violent hands on Abel[5], which

[2] Rom. xiii. 13.
[3] Matt. xx. 6.
[4] John xiii. 35.
[5] Gen. iv. 5—8.

showed that he lost withal the love of his neighbour. "But, O Cain! (saith St. Jerome,) what dost thou? what cause hast thou of this cruel hatred and desire of shedding innocent blood? What hath thy brother deserved? what violence hath he offered? Hath thy solitary brother displeased thee, because he pleased God? Thou knowest not what a loss thou shalt have, in the miss of so good a companion. But envy puffs up, blinds the understanding where it once entereth."[6] If you will hear how Lamech, that was an evil man, speaks, "If Cain were avenged sevenfold, I will be avenged seventy-sevenfold[7]:" here is nothing but a mind set upon revenge. But if you will hear how David the man of God speaks: "Is there any of the house of Saul, that I may show mercy unto them[8]?" he speaks of love and kindness towards his very enemies. And so Joseph, when he forgave his brethen; Because (saith he) I myself am under the hand of God.[9] All that we can or do forgive our enemies, are offences, or some small trespasses[1]; but that which God forgives, they are debts of great importance[2]: we, some few pence; He, talents, and those ten thousand too.

[6] Hier. de Cons. in Advers.
[7] Gen. iv. 24.
[8] 2 Sam. ix. 1.
[9] Gen. l. 19.
[1] Matt. xviii. 25.
[2] Matt. vi. 12.

Thrasybulus, a heathen man, to renew amity lost amongst men, made a law of forgetfulness of all wrongs and injuries that had been offered: it is not a law of Thrasybulus, but of Christ Jesus,—"Forgive, and it shall be forgiven you."[3] What hath heaven more glorious than the union of the Trinity? What hath the earth more heavenly than consent and unity? When one river runneth towards the ocean, it is a good course, and goes as it should; but when it meeteth with another river, then they make a current indeed. When the love of God doth carry us along, we go well; but when this meeteth with the love of our neighbour, then we set forward with a main stream into a sea of all blessedness. A special mean to increase this double love in the hearts of all believers, is a frequent participation of the holy and blessed Eucharist, which is called of some Ephodion, that is to say, a most necessary provision for our spiritual voyage. O blessed mystery! which amongst other high and heavenly effects, is a mean to strengthen us in this great journey, and comfort us towards the end of the way. Thus, setting ourselves in order, we may accept of the time, whensoever it shall please God, that brought us into the world, to take us from this our continuance

[3] Luke vi. 37.

in the same. The condition of life wherein we may stand prepared, requires our Christian practice: the happiness of this condition we shall find, when we come unto the state of all happiness.

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## CHAPTER XI.

*How the Christian man should demean himself, when sickness beginneth to grow upon him.*

The first and principal thing religiously to be remembered in the beginning of sickness, is, that the soul do call herself to a serious account of sins past; of the evil committed, and the good omitted; remembering that of the prophet, "I said, I will confess against myself my own unrighteousness."[4] Therefore by an ancient decree, the sick was enjoined, before sending for the physician, to make first a contrite confession and humble acknowledgment of his sins[5]; as if our sins were (as they often are) the cause of our sickness; and surely this decree was very respectively[6] had in use. For God doth often

[4] Ps. xxxii. 5. [5] In Decr. vinc.
[6] [With great reverence.]

times take away the effect when we take away the cause or use of sinning. Christ having cured the man that lay so many years by the pool of Bethesda[7], and showed no small work of mercy, (for being put back at the moving of the water, of himself weak, of friends destitute—the right course of this unrighteous world—if any go down, this man doth! Well, Christ cures him, and) gives him this caution, as a memorandum for the time to come: "Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."[8] Made "whole"—therefore sometimes a diseased creature: "made whole,"—therefore not of thyself whole: "made whole,"—therefore now a sound man: "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." He that afflicted thee for a time could have held thee longer. He that touched thee in part, could have striken thee whole: He that laid this upon thy body, hath power to lay a greater rod upon both body and soul; "Sin no more." So that by this we see, that sickness of the body may move us to cry out with the prophet, "Lord, remember not the sins and offences of our youth[9];" and, "O cleanse thou us from our secret faults."[1]

When sickness beginneth sharply to touch

[7] John v. 2, 3.
[8] John v. 14.
[9] Ps. xxv. 7.
[1] Ps. xix. 12.

us, we are careful in seeking and sending to procure the health of the body; as Asa sought to the physician to heal his disease[2], when he should have rather sent to the prophet, to have given him some spiritual conceipt for his sick soul. When the physician hath done, then we can be content the Divine should begin; as if some few words of ghostly counsel were enough, when we see there is but one way with us. No, no: the first and chiefest care in all extremities, should be a penitent imploring of the help of God, who in this case doth oftentimes cure both body and soul, and lengthen the days of sorrowful suppliants, as he did the days of Hezekiah. The lump of dried figs, means ordained by God, have also their convenient use. The physic of the soul must have the best cordials for the penitent patient. That of the people in the book of Numbers may be remembered, who being stung with the serpents in the wilderness, had no other mean of succour than the looking up to the serpent, which Moses (as a mean ordained by God) set up for the procuring of their health.[3] We have no other refuge in time of need, than the lifting up of the eyes of our souls, to behold Christ crucified. The people cried unto Moses and Aaron, but there was no

[2] 2 Chron. xvi. 12. [3] Numb. xxi. 8.

help until God in mercy appointed this miraculous mean. No relief could be found in the law, for the distressed soul, until God, in his wonderful love, raised up a mighty salvation in the state of grace. The serpent was lifted up on high, that all might behold him: so was the Son of God, that all believers might receive saving health from and by Him. In the curing those who were stung by the serpent, it was "Look and live[4];" for Christ's curing, it is "Believe and live."[5] This blessed mean, in times of greatest extremity, doth add no small comfort to the afflicted man. And thus the principal care, when sickness beginneth, being an humble acknowledgment of our sins[6], may move us to say, as Joseph's brethren, "therefore is this trouble come upon us."[7] A hearty confession of them all; an humble desire with bended hearts and knees for the remission thereof; a willing mind to be delivered from the bands of sin, may make us cry with the prophet David, "I am so fast in prison, that I cannot get out." And, last of all, a joyful lifting up of the heart to the throne of grace, may make us willingly renounce the world, and resign over ourselves unto his divine pleasure, to whose appointment we ought with patience meekly to submit our-

[4] Numb. xxi. 9.
[5] John iii. 14.
[6] [Ed. 1600, "which."]
[7] Gen. xlii. 21.

selves. We see we are in his hand, who alone hath power over all flesh; when we are in want, we then know the benefit of plenty; when we are in bondage, we then best perceive the good of freedom; when we are in sickness, we must thankfully acknowledge the blessing of health (if we have any thankfulness), and may easily gather, how God, by lingering sickness, doth in mercy stay till we make us ready. If it shall please Him to adjourn the time of this our pilgrimage, we ought to offer a determinate purpose, as a sacrifice upon the altar of our heart, to serve Him truly all the days of our life. And thus, having our trust in Christ crucified, we make this resolution: "If we live, we shall do well; if we die, we shall do better."

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## CHAPTER XII.

*How the sick should dispose of worldly goods and possessions.*

His sins by the sick party confessed, his soul religiously commended unto God, his desire either to live or die, given over to the Divine Providence, an orderly disposing of those temporal blessings, which God hath here lent unto his servants, is very convenient for every Christian in time of health,

and nothing ominous, as some have timorously doubted. None ought to alienate ancient inheritance, God would that the right heir should take place and succeed in order.[8] Experience doth show, that after wise men have lived long, and served God many years in the world, this disposing of blessings temporal, maketh us not to die the more quickly, but the more quietly; and therefore it was put in practice of Abraham, when he gave the principal part of his goods unto Isaac his son, and unto others: Abraham gave gifts or legacies[9]; this did David[1], Tobit[2], and Hezekiah[3], for the quiet of succeeding posterity, dispose of earthly possessions, going to possess heavenly. In this disposing, to be advised by them whose learning and knowledge is approved, doth much further the well ordering of all. We show our thankfulness unto God, and charity to men, when we become beneficial unto others; remembering whose saying it was, "It is a blessed thing to give."[4] In which giving the maintenance of churches, colleges, schools, hospitals, and such like godly uses should, where ability is answerable, be chiefly remembered; for by these deeds of mercy we do not only ourselves acknowledge God's goodness, but make many others, when we are long since dead and

[8] Numb. xxvii. 11. [9] Gen. xxv. 5, 6. [1] 1 Kings i. 30.
[2] Tob. iv. 20. [3] Isa. xxxviii. 1. [4] Acts xx. 35.

rotten, bless Him in the participation of the same. Merciful men (saith the wise man) have honoured God by this means, and how? "The Lord hath gotten great glory by them."[5] To give unto the poor in time of sickness, 'tis good, but more acceptable were it to do it daily and in time of best health. This giving is the ship that will never strike against the rock, but bring our merchandize home in safety. This giving is the most gainful interest, when the merciful shall receive a thousand for one. In keeping our riches, saith Gregory, we lose them; but in dispersing them abroad, we most surely keep them. To disperse them when we can hold them no longer, is not so much, though commendable in this kind; but to give our bread unto the hungry; nay, to take from our own plenty to give unto Christ's little ones, is commendable indeed. "Blessed is he (saith David) that considereth the poor and needy."[6] A cup of cold water shall not want one day a reward. Where is the large liberality we should have towards the poor members of Christ? The excessive pride of the world in attire, the needless superfluity in diet, hath eaten up hospitality and mercy towards many hungry souls. But to the disposition of these worldly goods and possessions, (wherein natural affection

[5] Ecclus. xliv. 2—15. [6] Ps. xli. 1.

may not be extinguished, the next heir or name disinherited, the custom of the place and ancientry not violated,) restitution, where wrong hath been offered, should be remembered, debts truly discharged; all which Christian-like disposition is seemly, both before God and man. The forgiving our enemies, when we can hurt them no more, is not so much. The perfect charity at all times, but principally at this time, that becometh Christians, may not be wanting. The example of Stephen, praying for his persecutors, may show us a mirror of charity towards all. These special respects observed, the sick may in the name of God dispose himself and his, as thus:

First, with a free heart and willing mind, to yield and render his soul into the hands of Almighty God, his Creator, who of his endless goodness gave him being, of his infinite mercy vouchsafed to redeem him, by the death and passion of his dear Son, and our Saviour Christ Jesus, in whose only merits is his last repose at parting: then commending his body to Christian burial, he may proceed as God's grace and wise advertisement shall direct; that so the sick, laying aside all earthly respects, may commend, with penitency and contrition of heart, his soul into the hands of Almighty God, humbly applying unto his faith the innumerable benefits of

Christ's passion; and of the three things he is then to dispose of, his body, goods, and soul, that principal care be had of all other, in commending this his soul with all devotion into the hands of Jesus Christ.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

*How necessary it is for the sick, leaving all worldly thoughts, to apply his mind to prayer and some godly meditation.*

THE disposition of worldly goods being well and wisely ordered, the mind is at more quiet to consider of heaven and heavenly things; more apt to draw nearer unto God by the actions of Christian piety; amongst which actions we have no sweeter incense than our devotion offered up by prayer. The lifting up of our hands, we may make our evening or latter sacrifice.[7] We have no better orators to plead our cause, no surer ambassadors to conclude our peace, than our humble supplications unto Him, who sits ever in commission to hear our suits, and looks that we should send up our prayers that He may send down his mercy. By which means we

[7] Ps. cxli. 2.

enter into a spiritual traffic with God Himself; we give a cup of cold water, and He returns us a fountain of the water of life[8]; we give Him, with the poor widow, two mites[9], and He gives us again the whole treasure of the temple. The mercy of God (saith one) is like a vessel full to the very brim; if once his faithful children, by the hand of faithful prayer, begin to take of it, it doth overflow unto them.

Moreover, it is not with God as with man, those who are petitioners are wont to be troublesome unto them; but with God, the more we offer up our prayers unto Him, the more we are accepted of Him. The Ediles amongst the Romans had ever their doors standing open, for all that had occasion of complaint to have free access unto them. With God the gates of mercy are wide open to all poor sinners that will make their prayers unto Him: "Come and welcome." Now as we should at other times and upon other occasions, with Abraham, sometimes leave our terrene affairs, as he left his servants beneath when he went into the mount to sacrifice to God[1]; so principally in sickness and grief of body should we then ascend into the contemplation of heavenly things, and have recourse to God's mercy, as to a

[8] John iv. 14. [9] Luke xxi. 2. [1] Gen. xxii. 5.

city of refuge: "Call upon me (saith the Lord) in the time of trouble, and I will hear thee, and thou shalt praise me."[2] In the time of trouble, there is a refuge for extremity: "I will hear thee," there is the reward of mercy: "and thou shalt praise me," there is the reflex of thankful duty. Christ wills all that are weary and heavy laden to come unto Him, and they shall not lose their labour, He will refresh them.[3] In time of need no surer sentry[4], than by humble prayer to repair to God: "let us endeavour (saith St. Austin) even to die in prayer."[5] "I lifted mine eyes unto the hills (saith the Prophet), from whence cometh my help."[6] And in another place, "As the eyes of servants look upon the hand of their master, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us." Wherefore, with the same Prophet, let us devoutly say, "In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust, let me never be put to confusion, but rid me, and deliver me in thy righteousness: correct me not in thine anger, O Lord, neither rebuke me in thine indignation: heal

[2] Ps. l. 15. [3] Matt. xi. 28.

[4] [The edition of 1600 has "centerie," later editions have "sanctuary."]

[5] Demus operam ut moriamur in precatione.—*August. de Vera Invoca.* cap. 33. [6] Ps. cxxiii. 2.

me, for my bones are vexed: be not far from me, for trouble is hard at hand, and there is none to deliver me: remember thy loving mercies, which have been ever of old; cast me not away when my strength faileth me: I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever against me: wash me and I shall be clean: Lord, hear me, hide not thy face from me, for trouble is hard at hand: O let my cry enter into thy presence." To this or the like penitent complaint, that joyful reply is not far off: "Because he hath put his trust in me, I will deliver him. I will set him up, because he hath known my name. I am with him in his tribulation."[7]

The select prayers to be used in the Visitation of the Sick, should be observed; with many of the Psalms of David, which, when the afflicted read them, instruct the conscience, and in times of sickness are wont more than ordinary to move the mind. "For these divine hymns," saith St. Basil, "they are a part of holy scripture, high in mystery, profound in sense, comfortable in doctrine, and have in times of affliction a special and peculiar grace to instruct the soul."[8] Amongst these the thirty-eighth psalm, "Put me not to rebuke, O Lord;" the fifty-first, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord;" the seventieth psalm, "Haste to deliver me, O God;"

[7] Ps. xci. 14, 15. [8] Basil. in præf. in Lib. Psal.

the seventy-first, "In thee, O Lord, have I trusted;" the seventy-seventh, "I will cry unto the Lord with my voice;" the hundred and thirtieth psalm, "Out of the deeps have I called unto thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice;" with many other like psalms proper and peculiar for the sick. Hereunto may be added a silent meditation, wherein the soul doth enter a solitary talk with God, which is very convenient in this case. When the joys of heaven have leisure to present themselves to our religious thoughts, the pleasures of our sinful life, and this world's vanities, are then seen to be of small value (as they are indeed). Then may we call to mind the unspeakable love of God towards man in general, and ourselves in particular. How this mercy stept forth in time of need, before execution of justice to save man. That it was a work of comfort, when God said, "Let there be light made[9];" but that it was a work of counsel and all comfort, when he said in the great work of man's redemption, "Let there be a Christ born," which shall save my people from their sins. And now have we fit opportunity to meditate upon the sufferings of the Son of God, his passion, his descent into hell, his resurrection the third day, his ascension, and glorious sitting at the right hand of God: so that at the name of Jesus, the sorrowful

[9] Gen. i. 3.

sinner may say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God."[1]

We cannot in the world better employ our thoughts, than in calling to mind how God hath kept us from our youth up[2], from how many dangers we have been delivered, into which we have seen not a few fall before our eyes, and ourselves, by his only mercy, unto this day freed from the same. Can we but with all thankfulness call to mind the goodness of God towards us for the time past; and put our whole trust and confidence in Him, even in these greatest extremities: yea, both in life and death, for the time to come, seeing "the Lord is nigh to them that call upon him, yea, to all such as call upon him faithfully?"[3]

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## CHAPTER XIV.

*How the sick, when sickness more and more increaseth, may be moved to constancy and perseverance.*

When sickness more and more increaseth, we are more and more put in mind of our mortality; and gently moved to renounce by little and little, all the repose we have or can have in this transitory life: to arm ourselves

[1] John xx. 28. [2] Ps. xxii. 9: Ps. xxvii. 9.
[3] Ps. cxlv. 18.

to stand with constancy unto the end: remembering evermore, as we had a time to be born, so have we a time to die; and our way to enter into life is first to pass the pinching griefs of a momentary death. To raise up our spirits in times of greatest trial, we may recount with ourselves, that Christ Himself went not up to glory but first He suffered pain. When Uriah was willed by David himself to take his peace at home, "Shall I see" (quoth he) "my lord Joab, and the ark of God lie abroad in the field, and shall I go take my rest and ease? No, I will not."[4] Shall we see the Son of God Himself all in gore blood, suffering for the sins of the whole world, and shall we refuse all suffering, taking our ease in Sion, and our rest upon the mountains of Samaria, as loth to endure any cross or calamity at all? Is that soldier worthy to triumph with his captain, that would never strike stroke to fight the battle? Again, whatsoever we suffer, Christ suffered more for us. But that which principally is to be remembered, this our striving is not beating the air[5], for after we have fought a good fight, there is laid up for us a crown of glory.[6] God is (saith Tertullian) Agonothetes, both he that proposeth the prize, and rewardeth the champion.[7] Consider the old generations

[4] 2 Sam. xi. 11.
[5] 1 Cor. ix. 26.
[6] 2 Tim. iv. 8.
[7] Tertul. ad Mart.

of men, and mark them well: "Was there ever any confounded that put his trust in the Lord? Who hath continued in his fear, and was forsaken? or whom did he ever despise that called upon Him[8]?" wherefore let the languishing person take unto him comfort in God's mercy. Was ever the righteous forsaken? God told Josiah that he should be gathered unto his fathers in peace[9]; and yet Josiah died in war.[1] God gave him a constant mind, whereby he died peaceably. The Lord told Jeremiah he should not be vanquished. Jeremiah was stoned, but not vanquished: God gave him an invincible faith. The angel to the church of Smyrna saith, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."[2]

To raise up himself in this lively faith, the sick may make a hearty confession of his Christian belief, saying:—

O Holy Trinity, I commend myself unto Thee, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which in unity of nature art one, and the self-same God. I commend me unto Thee, O omnipotent Father, which hast created me, yea heaven and earth, with all things visible and invisible. I commend me unto Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, who for me and the salvation of mankind, wert sent into the world, conceived by the power of the Holy

[8] Ecclus. ii. 10.
[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 29.
[9] 2 Kings xxii. 20.
[2] Rev. ii. 10.

Ghost, born man, of the blessed Virgin Mary, didst suffer, wast dead. buried, descendedst into hell, the third day didst rise again from the dead, ascendedst into heaven, where Thou sittest at the right hand of the Father; from whence Thou shalt come at the day of judgment, to judge all flesh. I commend me unto Thee, O Holy Spirit, which proceedest from the Father and the Son, whom together I adore and glorify, which dost quicken one Catholic and Apostolic Church; to which Thou hast in mercy granted remission of sins, the resurrection of these mortal bodies, and everlasting life after death.

The same confession may be made of the sick in manner of oblation: as, I offer myself unto Thee, O Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, &c. Also in manner of an humble supplication, as, I beseech Thee, O Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, &c. In which Christian confession, God's servants may stand constant unto the end, against all temptations. Not unlike the people of Ciniensis, who when the ambassadors of Brutus would have them deliver over their city and freedom into his hands, returned this answer:[3] "Tell your captain Brutus, our ancestors have left us weapons to defend our right with courage and constancy unto the end." The Holy

[3] Ferrum nobis a majoribus, &c.

Ghost, by the apostle St. Paul, in the sixth to the Ephesians, showeth what these weapons are; as "the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel[4];" where is spiritual furniture for all parts, only the back or hinder part excepted, to signify that the Christian soldier should not turn his back before his enemies.

The eagle, to try her young, is said to carry them up against the piercing beams of the sun, which seeing them to endure, she acknowledgeth them as her own. Christ knows us to be his, by our constant suffering, and therefore sometimes brings us unto the conflict. We read "that Sheba, a rebellious Jew, blew a trumpet, and many of the people followed after him, but the men of Judah, who were of the blood royal, they, as good Israelites, would live and die with David their king."[5] The old Sheba blows many an enticing blast, to carry us away from our true allegiance to Christ Jesus our King. All that are born of water and the Holy Ghost, will live and die in this faith. Howsoever the world for a time frown upon them, yet they are not as the reed without pith or substance, and so waving with every wind, but firm and constant, like John Baptist, that will hold his

[4] Eph. vi. 14, 15. [5] 2 Sam. xx. 1.

profession, though he lose his head for it. Wherefore, considering that there is no crown without a conquest, and no conquest without courage and perseverance; the faithful, like Job, say, "Though the Lord kill us, yet will we put our trust in him."[6]

## CHAPTER XV.

*How they may be advertised, who seem unwilling to depart the world.*

"If in this life only (saith the apostle) we have hope in Christ, then are we of all men most miserable[7]:" to show, in effect, that we have not in this life the accomplishment of our hope. Not here, therefore, we should expect it; elsewhere: this is not our paradise, but a barren desert: we may not look for our heaven here: our city is above, which we all must inhabit. To draw back, (when we are to go most comfortably to take possession of the same, and the hope so long hoped for should most strengthen us in the way,) is far from that Christian belief whereof we make daily profession: often have we prayed "Thy kingdom come."[8] Now when God is leading us unto the same, our unwillingness to be gone cannot but argue great weakness of

[6] Job xiii. 15. [7] 1 Cor. xv. 17. [8] Matt. vi. 10.

faith. "What would we have done if God (saith St. Jerome,) had commanded us to die without mentioning the resurrection? His will ought to have been our comfort, but now having this stay, why should we waver?"[9] Oftentimes have we wished, that we were once freed from this world's captivity: now God is going about to free us indeed, our desire is to continue our captivity still: not unlike children who cry out of pain and grief, and when the chirurgeon comes that should ease them of all, they choose rather to remain as they are. There is no mariner but, after many sharp storms, desireth the haven: and shall not we, after so many tempests of this troublesome world, accept of our deliverance when the time is come? We are given to love the world too much, and a great deal more than we should, being only strangers in the same. Had we no farther expectation but only to enjoy a state temporal, where we might set up our rest, as having here attained our chiefest good, then might our departure from this world be very grievous indeed, because our being and happiness should end together; but looking, as we do, for a further condition, so permanent, so blessed, and death being the passage or entry thereunto, there is no cause

[9] Quid faceremus si mori tantummodo sine resurrectione præciperet Deus? voluntas ejus sufficeret ad solatium.—*Jer. de non Lugend. Mort.*

why man, if he bethink himself, should unwillingly set forward when his time of departure is at hand.

First, remembering it is the ordinance of God, the course of all flesh, and, as Joshua calleth it, the way of all the world.[1] "What man is he (saith the prophet) that liveth, and shall not see death?"[2] It is not proper to any one, which is common to all; kings, princes, strong, valiant, take part with them in this lot. There is no reason that any should look to be privileged in that wherein all, without exception, must, will they, nill they, submit themselves. Secondarily, that it is a mean to bring us from a prison without ease, from a pilgrimage without rest, we all see evidently: and this made the wise man praise the dead, above them which are yet alive[3], and prefer the day of death before the day of birth; surely for no other reason, than for that in the one we come into a vale of misery, in the other we depart from it, departing in the faith of Him by whom we look for a better state to come. Thirdly, this being the way for the obtaining so high a reward, we may step forth with confidence in his mercy, who now calleth us by death to the participation of the same. Why, on God's blessing, should any be loth

[1] Jos. xxiii. 14. [2] Ps. lxxxix. 47.
[3] Eccl. iv. 2.

that the soul should return to Him that gave it?

When the loving mother sendeth forth her child to nurse, and the nurse hath kept it long enough, if the mother take her own child home again, hath this nurse any cause to grudge or complain? how much less cause have we to show any part of unwillingness, that God should take home this departing soul, the work of his own hands, the plant of his own grafting, who first gave it, and will, before all others, most lovingly keep and tender it? There is none knows the love of a mother, but a mother. There is none knows the love of God but God, who is love. Wherefore we are very unnatural to ourselves, if we should give testimony of discontentment when our souls should be delivered into his hands, who is the best preserver of all. Where is our desire with St. Paul, "to be dissolved, and to be with Christ?"[4] Where is our complaining with the prophet David, "that we are not yet come to appear in the presence of God?"[5] Where is the longing of St. Austin, to see that head which was crowned, those hands which were pierced for our sins?[6] Had we the love and faith which these good men had, we should rather wish for the hour

[4] Phil. i. 23. [5] Ps. xlii. 2.
[6] August. Medit. 2.

of our rest, than show any unwillingness to depart, when God is about to call us hence. Shall natural inclination overrule the force of Christian hope? Can we forget the prayer of Christ in the garden? "Father, not my will, but thine be fulfilled."[7] The stars by their proper motion are carried from the west to the east, and yet by the motion of obedience to their first mover, they pass along from the east unto the west. The waters by their natural course follow the centre of the earth, yet yielding unto the higher body, which is the moon, are subject to her motions. The motion of obedience to the will of God, who is the first mover, the higher body, should draw us and all our desires, how contrary soever in nature; for hereunto all should yield themselves, and obediently follow. Those who by alchemy will turn worser metal into a more pure, must first dissolve the worse; so if we will change our wills into the will of God, we must clean dissolve them, that his will only may take place. When Christ, in the Apocalypse, saith, "I come quickly," the saints reply, "Even so, Amen, come, Lord Jesus[8]:" to show whatsoever doth please Christ could not displease them, much less his coming, which is most joyful to all that fear and love his name.

[7] Luke xxii. 42. [8] Rev. xxii. 20.

And here we may consider, by this means of yielding ourselves meekly unto God, we have occasion offered to show our subjection to his divine pleasure; as Abraham had, when God commanded him to offer up Isaac his son[9]; nay, Isaac his only son, and Isaac whom he loved, and Isaac in whom rested all the hope of his blessed posterity. Here was a conflict, wherein God would see which was strongest in Abraham, either faith or fatherly affection. But Abraham, who is called the father of the faithful, and so one that leaves his children an example for the time to come, in this strait resigned his will to the will of God; stood not weighing so high a precept in the light scales or balance of human reason; but with hope contrary unto hope, proceeded to the accomplishment thereof. The Apostles of our Saviour Christ being willed to launch forth, and to pass unto the other side of the lake, stood not casting timorous doubts as thus: This Genezareth is a dangerous passage, the evening draweth on, we ourselves plain fishermen, none of the skilfullest pilots[1]; but when Christ commanded them, without more ado, away they go. Now Christ bids us to put off from the shore of our earthly estate; what should we but obediently set forward: at the other side is heaven, the haven of our hope.

[9] Gen. xxii. 4. [1] Mark iv. 35.

Again, seeing we must needs away; if we must away, why not now? if not now, when? There is a time to be born, (saith the wise man) and there is a time to die; we came into this world upon condition to leave it; yield up our lives we must, with Codrus, that valiant Athenian, and that before the field be won. With the Theban captain, let us not care to change life with death, so the victory may be ours. And to say the very truth, we have no great cause to covet long life in this stony-hearted world: we see some miseries, and wise men foresee more; the righteous is taken away "from the evil to come[2];" as God took Josias, because he should not see the calamity of the sinful people. For our own estate in particular, when decrepit age cometh, which we so much wish for before: and those fourscore years, which is the furthest hope of our strength, are we not then cumbersome to others, and irksome to ourselves? In the meantime, so many snares and engines are laid by the professed enemy of man, to entrap men's souls, as we may, with reverence and love, wonder at the mercy of God in our delivery for the time past, and peaceably accept our passage into a place of true security, now consequently to ensue.

Last of all, a remembrance of the place

[2] 2 Kings xxii. 20.

whither we are going, should take us away as the angels took Lot from Sodom. It is unto a city of all continuance[3], even that city where our souls shall live. Let us send our faith in believing, our hope in expecting (as Joshua sent messengers before), to view that country which God will give us. These messengers will bring us word, that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived the high excellency thereof; which (methinks) should move men to give this world a willing farewell. To conclude with St. Cyprian, let pagans and infidels fear death, who never feared God in their life; but let Christians go as travellers unto their native home, as children unto their loving father, willingly, joyfully. "One thing (saith the prophet) have I desired of the Lord, that I may dwell in the house of my God all the days of my life."[4]

[3] Heb. xiii. 14. [4] Ps. xxvii. 4.

## CHAPTER XVI.

*How they may be induced to depart meekly, that seem loth to leave worldly goods, wife, children, friends, or such like.*

While we set our affections upon earthly things only, we much affect them, and are loth to depart from them; but once taking a taste of heavenly, we begin to grow out of liking with the baseness of our former desires, and bend all our affections to an earnest expectation of far better. If we do respect riches, Christ hath greater riches in another world, than all the empire of Alexander can yield: if honour, He hath greater honour than all the thrones of earthly potentates can afford (for one day in his house is better than a thousand). If friends, heaven hath the glorious company of saints and angels, who rejoice at our entrance into their common joy: what more acceptable than good company, and together joyful company? The company is good where the righteous live for ever joyful, where is nothing but a cheerful singing of Alleluiah.[1] For worldly possessions, here we found them, and here we leave

[1] Rev. xix. 3.

them. The time of our enjoying them is uncertain, because we see them ebbing and flowing like the sea; and we do not possess them as we ought, unless we are ready at times best beseeming unto God to leave them. But the loss of friends cannot be but grievous unto flesh and blood; to leave wife and children cannot but go near the heart, where affection hath been rooted. Yea, but if we open the other eye, and see whither we are going—to Christ that redeemed us, and is nearer than all—we leave pleasant delights, but receive more pleasant by infinite degrees. Wherefore to unburden ourselves of all earthly cares, we may observe this course, which is, to commend wife, children, friends, and such like, in our humble prayers, unto his protection, who can better provide for them than ourselves; "who is a father of the fatherless, and taketh into his own hand the cause of the widow and orphans."[2] Which the ancient patriarchs well knowing, at their departures from the world, prayed for the blessing of God to come upon their posterities, and so left them; knowing that they were but sent before them, who should also follow after.

Did we rightly consider the manifold grievances which even our chiefest delights, which

[2] Ps. lxviii. 5.

we are so loth to leave, have often brought us, we should soon see our departure from them, to be a departure from many cares. The sun, though it be cheerful and warm, yet is it sometimes less pleasing by reason of scorching heat; the air, though it be lightsome, yet is it sometimes gloomy and over-cast; our worldly delights, and whatsoever is here pleasing unto us, have had, oftentimes, much sour sauce. Why, then, (saith Fulgentius) do we not forsake this want, to attain a future plenty?[3] Of all other, we need not so much respect the foregoing of worldly possessions, which are (saith one) for these causes, rather to be despised of us, than to be left with discontentment. First, for that they are vanities: Secondarily, for that they are not only vanities, but also deceits: Thirdly, because they are pricking thorns: Fourthly, for that they are even griefs themselves. Be it we use them aright, we are but only stewards: when the owner himself will have it so, what should we else, but with all contentment of mind forsake and leave them? We came all of us, with Job, naked into the world, and, with Job, naked shall we return again; only our good deeds and our bad (as they say) bear us company. A great conqueror of the world would have

[3] Fulg. ad Theod.

his ensign-bearer carry forth a sorry cloth, or shrouding sheet, saying, Here is all of all his conquests a worthy captain doth carry with him. Hither we come, as Jacob came to Laban[4]; only by God's providence, we are what we are. These herds and droves about us, they are from the mercy of God; not plants growing in our own soil, not vapours that did arise of us, but of the nature of influences, that from heaven are come upon us. Every one sueth to God in formâ pauperis for things necessary. Wherefore the prophet David saith, Lord, Thou giving, we gather[5]; and therefore [are they] called goods, because they are God's, his and not our own, whereby we learn with contentment to leave them, when the giver thereof shall of his bounty call us away to receive better.

But is it possible we should forget whither we are going? Where should the members be, but where the head reigneth? Where should the heart be, but where our heavenly treasure is?[6] Christ, who is our treasure, is in heaven, whither first our affections ascend, and then we follow after. All these riches remain not[7], nor help in time of need; they take them wings often and fly from us, and are but straw and stubble, whereupon we may build no sure foundation. And therefore we

[4] Gen. xxxii. 10.
[5] Ps. cxlv. 15.
[6] Matt. vi. 21.
[7] Prov. xxvii. 24.

need not so much care to forsake them. On the other side, we leave the society of men, and go to that celestial society above in heaven, where a multitude of our good friends expect us. Our separation each from other here, is only for a time ; our continuance together in the life to come, shall be for ever.

## CHAPTER XVII.

*How the impatient may be persuaded to endure the pains of sickness, and to die peaceably.*

THE conflict once begun, the courage of the captain then, and never but then, is experienced. When God doth call his children to any cross or calamity, then begins the battle ; then their blessed patience and meek contentment is made manifest, or never. Knowing that all goes by his ordering, in whom we "live, move, and have all our being[1];" and that no physician can be more careful for the health of the body than God is wont to be for the health of the soul; how bitter soever the potion seem, yet receiving it from Him who means us so well, we should not but receive with patient suffering whatsoever his merciful hands shall reach unto us. "My son, (saith the wise man,) when thou comest

[1] Acts xvii. 28.

unto the service of God, prepare thy soul unto temptation, and shrink not away when thou art tried; for whom the Lord loveth, him he chastiseth."[2] Gold and silver are tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of adversity. If God will have Moses to be a governor of his people, God will have Moses to be cast out and laid in the bulrushes by the river's brink.[3] If God will have Daniel to be a ruler under Darius, Daniel must lie for a time in the lions' den.[4] If God will have Lazarus to be in Abraham's bosom, blessed Lazarus, thy sores and sorrows soon ceased, but thy joys are everlasting.[5] He that had seen Elias persecuted by Jezebel[6]; Susanna accused by two false elders[7]; the holy man Job afflicted from top to toe[8], would have thought God had little respected their sincere worship and reverence of his name. Flesh and blood would have thought their state most distressed; but if we stay a little and observe their patience, we shall see their deliverance not far behind. Should we not depart the world with a willing mind? The faith we have or ought to have of our changing, can tell us, "Unless a grain of corn fall into the earth and die," that same "it shall bear fruit" will not follow: the grain of

[2] Ecclus. ii. 1—3. [3] Exod. ii. 3. [4] Dan. vi. 16.
[5] Luke xvi. 20. [6] 1 Kings xix. 3. [7] Sus. 28. [8] Job ii.

corn must be cast into the earth, before we can have increase of fruit.[9] Although our dissolution be unto nature a painful travail, and therefore it is as Rachel said, "Benoni," "an effect of sorrow[1]," yet is the same to grace an offspring of strength, and so counted [Benjamin] "the son of her power." To endure and suffer somewhat, seeing the reward of suffering is great, should be less grievous unto us. Elias must go to heaven in a whirlwind.[2] God will send Jacob an angel to comfort him in his journey[3] after all his trouble with Laban; and God will bring him home with abundance of increase at last.

God is faithful, and will not suffer his to be tempted above that they are able; Tarry a little the Lord's leisure, deliverance will come, peace will come, joy will come. Should it so much grieve any in time of sickness? Why Christ Himself went not up to glory, but first He suffered pain. "Christ upon the cross, as a doctor in his chair[4]," read to us all a lecture of patience. Whatsoever we suffer, He patiently suffered more for us, and hath called us to his eternal glory[5]; that, after suffering a little, He will make us perfect, confirm, strengthen, and stablish us, which will be a happy refreshing after all. "That I may (saith St. Austin)

[9] John xii. 24. [1] Gen. xxxv. 18. [2] 2 Kings ii. 11.
[3] Gen. xxxii. 2. [4] Crux pendentis, Cathedra docentis.
[5] 1 Pet. v. 10.

after this languishing life, see Christ in glory and be partaker of so great a good, what, though sickness weaken, labours oppress, watchings consume, cold benumb, heat inflame, nay, though my whole life be spent in sighs and sorrows, what is all to the rest that shall ensue in the life to come?"[6] The apostle St. Paul "counted these momentary afflictions not worthy of the glory that shall be showed unto us."[7] Wherefore, seeing that after all these sorrows we are going to so quiet a haven, we may with patience endure a time some fatherly correction. Shall we look for a garland, and never set foot to run the race? Shall we with Job's wife, be content only to receive good at the hands of God, and no touch of trouble. David took it not well when the Ammonites ill entreated his ambassadors[8]; these afflictions are God's ambassadors: to repine or grudge against them, is to entreat them evil: what should we but accept all thankfully, and in peaceable manner depart this world?

It is said of Plato, a heathen man, that at the point of death, amidst all his pains, he[9] gave the gods thanks that he was born a man, and not a beast, a Greek and not a barbarian, and so quietly left the world. How much more should the Christian man

[6] August. Mæn. [7] Rom. viii. 18. [8] 2 Sam. x. 4.
[9] Ed. 1660, "Who was said to give."

with all grateful remembrance of God's goodness towards him, of blessings received, of dangers prevented, now patiently bequeath his departing soul into the hands of God, quietly enduring his transitory trial! Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. "Be patient," saith St. James: "behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth, until he receive the former and the latter rain; settle your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."[1] Take the prophets for an example; if we will rejoice as they now rejoice, we must live as they sometimes lived, and suffer as they suffered. If we look into the proceedings of God with all his servants, we shall see Him chastening them for a time, and leaving them a little in the trial of their faith. The loving mother doth sometimes leave the child, goes aside, and seeing the infant moaning after her, then she runneth and is wont to make the more of it. When God seemeth to withdraw a little his help from us, it is only to see whether we will moan after Him; which when He perceiveth we do, we are the more beloved of Him, and withal ourselves the sooner drawn by these means to the exercise of obedience, humility, patience, unto the end. When the waters of the flood came upon the face of the

[1] James v. 7.

earth, down went stately turrets and towers; but as the waters rose, so the ark rose, still higher and higher. In like sort, when the waters of affliction arise, down goes the pride of life, the lust of the eyes, in a word, all the vanities of the world. But this ark of the soul riseth as these waters rise, and how too? even nearer and nearer towards heaven. Wherefore to endure the pains of sickness patiently, being an example taken from all God's children, as if a voice from heaven did testify of the patient man, "This is my beloved son," we may not forget in a time of need, so good a virtue, for which God hath a double crown, the one our content here, the other hereafter of all continuance.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

*How they are to be comforted, who seem to be troubled in mind with a remembrance of their sins, and fear of judgment to come.*

When the servant of the man of God saw the city of Dothan to be compassed about with a multitude of enemies, he cries out to the prophet, saying, "Alas; master, what shall we

do?"[1] The sorrowful sinner, considering the justice of God, the severity of judgment, the malice of the old serpent, now all laying siege and battery unto his departing soul: the world forsaking him, his friends departing from him, or at least sometimes weeping by him, cannot but with complaint say, What shall I do? which way shall I turn? Let us sprinkle our hearts with the blood of the Lamb, and the destroyer shall not enter nor have power to hurt. Let us call to mind the love of God in not sparing his own Son, which the Apostle took as an argument of good consequence: "if he gave us his own Son, how[2] will he not give us all things?"[3] and therefore mercy in time of need?

What heart is able to conceive the Divine providence from the beginning had over man? One bringeth in the Three Persons in Trinity after this manner consulting of his good: God the Father saith, "Let us create man; but being created, will he not fall away?" God the Son answereth, "Though he fall away, I will redeem him; but being redeemed, will he walk worthy of his calling?" God the Holy Ghost replieth, "I will conserve him, I will sanctify him." The prophet prays that the eyes of his servant might be opened, which petition granted, then he sees that they were

[1] 2 Kings vi. 15.
[2] [Ed. 1600, "How much."]
[3] Rom. viii. 32.

more who stood for them, than all the multitude which compassed the city. Now may the sick with Apostles pray, "Lord, increase my faith;" by which faith he shall see that Christ with all his merits, is for him, which is more and of more efficacy, than the whole power of darkness that can oppose itself against him. This blessed object of Christ's merits is alone able to revive the fainting sinner, and make him argue his right against Satan; as thus: Where is thy force, thou roaring lion? hath not Christ weakened it? wilt thou know my strength or might, wherein I overcome? it is the blood of the Lamb. Thus when, like David, we come to fight with Goliath, we cast away Saul's armour, and all trust and confidence in ourselves, and only set forward in the name of the God of Israel. "Doth the law indict us of transgression?"[4] We have a supersedeas to stay that course, and our commission is under seal, to appeal unto the throne of grace. Doth it bring forth our debts bill? our answer is, The obligation is cancelled, the book is crossed, and the whole debt fully discharged.[5] Do the sins and offences of our youth now dismay us? "If we acknowledge our sins (saith St. John), God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."[6]

[4] Gal. iii. 13. [5] Col. ii. 14. [6] 1 John i. 9.

Ay[7]! but do a multitude of sins environ us, and we see ourselves great sinners? Why, Christ appeared first after his resurrection to Mary Magdalen, to show that He brought comfort to the greatest sinners of all. "This is a true saying (saith the Apostle), that Christ came into the world to save sinners, whereof I am the chief[8]:" as if St. Paul put himself in the number, as every one should, and say, Whereof I am one, nay, the chief.

And here we may call to mind that bottomless depth of God's mercy, who will be called rather by the name of a father, to intimate unto us his love, and to encourage us to call upon Him in time of need, whose goodness is diffusive and communicable unto others; whose bounty is delighted in nothing more than in doing good; and is wont rather to give great than small things. God is not such a one as Adam took Him to be, from whom when he had sinned, he should fly, or hide himself for fear; but God is such a one to whom Adam, and all that have sinned, may have access with hope and love. The servants of Benhadad, in the first of Kings and the twentieth, when they saw and considered well their distressed case, began to advise their master Benhadad after this manner: "We hear that the kings of Israel are merciful, wherefore let us clothe ourselves in

[7] Ed. 1600, "I." [8] 1 Tim. i. 15.

sackcloth, that so we may go and find favour in their sight."[9] If this mercifulness were a thing proper unto the kings of Israel, what may we look for at the hands of Him who is the God of Israel, before whom they that humble themselves shall questionless find grace and mercy? My sin is greater. No, Cain, thou errest; God's mercy is far greater, couldest thou ask mercy. Men cannot be more sinful than God is merciful, if with penitent hearts they will call upon Him. But come we unto Christ, the fountain of all mercy; there shall we find God in his mediation only; great without quantity, and good without quality (as St. Austin speaketh). Christ in the Gospel was called of the Pharisees, by way of reproach, "a friend of publicans and sinners[1];" and so was He in truth and verity; never was there such a friend to poor sinners, and such publicans as he was who strake his breast and said, "God be merciful to me a sinner."[2] The parable of the lost sheep doth show this love in seeking the lost sinner; the joy of the angels of heaven over our repentance may much comfort us to call for grace. When the wandering son had consumed his father's substance, but yet returned sorrowfully to acknowledge himself; the father saith not, Whence comest thou? or,

[9] 1 Kings xx. 31. [1] Matt. xi. 19. [2] Luke xviii. 13.

Where is now all thy patrimony? but, "Bring hither the new garment, kill the fat calf, let us rejoice; my son was dead and is alive."[3] Here was a welcome home that might amaze this wandering son! Though we sometimes lose the nature of children, yet God doth never lose the name and nature of a father, a name of privilege to his children: we cry "Abba, Father[4];" a name of care and providence; your heavenly Father careth for you: a name of love; "if you give your children good things, how much more shall your Father in heaven give you, if you ask them of him?"[5] And not only a Father, but our Father, which should wound our hearts and kindle our affections in all distresses, with comfort to call upon Him. It may be said also in this case, as before it was said of the affection of a mother, There is none knows the love of a father, but a father, nor any the love of God, but God Himself, who is love. That thou mightest be blessed, O man! first He created thee: that thou mightest be recovered, when thou wert lost, then He redeemed thee, which redeeming showeth a price paid for thy ransom, which price was his dearest blood. When Christ wept and shed some few tears for Lazarus, the Jews reasoned and

[3] Luke xv. 22. [4] Gal. iv. 6.
[5] Matt. vi. 32. Luke xi. 13.

said, "See how he loved him!"[6] But when Christ shed his own blood for us, and that in great abundance, O see how He loved us? If He bought us with so dear a price, will He refuse his own pennyworth? If He sought us flying from Him, shall He not much more receive us when we come unto Him? "Can a mother," saith the prophet Isaiah, "forget the child of her womb? yea, though she do, yet will not God forget his people."[7] "When my father and mother forsook me," saith David, "the Lord took me up."[8] We have a good Samaritan, that when the priest and the Levite left us wounded[9], (to wit, the law and figures thereof passed by us,) He bound up our wounds, and paid for our curing, that we might be recovered unto everlasting health. Our Joseph is gone before to provide for his brethren[1]: was there ever such love? Look how wide the east is from the west, so far hath He set our sins from us; nay, like as the pillar of clouds was set between the host of their enemies and the tents of the people of Israel[2], that no harm might befal them, so hath He set his providence between us and all casualties, that no hurt should oppress us. We should be suitors unto Christ, and lest our manifold

[6] John xi. 36. [7] Isa. xlix. 15. [8] Psa. xxvii. 10.
[9] Luke x. 34. [1] Gen. xlv. 5. [2] Ex. xiv. 20.

sins should make us bashful, He calleth us unto Him, saying, "Come unto me, all that are weary and heavy laden, and I will refresh you."[3] Did all the poor creatures come unto the ark to save themselves? did the angels carry Lot out of Sodom? And shall not we come unto Him who calls us so lovingly, and means no other but to bring us unto his everlasting kingdom?

Wherefore, let neither the multitude of our sins, the terror of the law, nor the fear of God's justice, discourage us in time of distress. Christ hath put them all to flight, as David did the Philistines, by killing the killing letter of the law.[4] Who would not cast his burden upon Him that doth desire to give us ease? "As I live, saith the Lord, I would not the death of a sinner."[5] God would have the sins to die, but the sinner to live. Whose creatures have nourished us? whose providence hath preserved us? whose mercy hath carried us all along, from our very cradles until this day? whose watchful eye hath delivered us from so many dangers, both of body and soul? Have we had such and so many experiments of his love, and should we now doubt thereof? Is the Judge become our Advocate, and shall we fear to go forwards towards the throne of grace? "The

[3] Matt. xi. 28. [4] 2 Cor. iii. 6. [5] Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

Spirit and the bride say, Come: and let him that is athirst come, and let whosoever will drink of the water of life, come freely."[6] Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's chosen? who shall condemn? Christ, at the right hand of God, maketh request for us.[7]

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## CHAPTER XIX.

*How the sick in the agony of death may be prepared towards his end.*

All our life long have we lived in a departure and farewell from the world: since our very first entrance we were ever drawing towards our end. Our pilgrimage is almost over: when we approach towards the period of our course, what else remaineth but a hearty commending our souls to God, and a comfortable expectation of a better life to come? When weakness of human nature doth not afford ability to manifest our souls' affections, God shall accept at our hands the sending up of our sighs and desires to heaven, who said unto Moses, "Why hast thou cried unto me for this people?"[8] And yet we find that Moses spake never a word; to show that He heard the secret supplication of Moses' heart. Jonas

[6] Rev. xxii. 17. [7] Rom. viii. 34. [8] Ex. xiv. 15.

prayed in the belly of the whale[9], when he thought upon God: Susanna in her distress, when she lifted up her eyes to heaven.[1] "Have I not remembered thee," saith David, "upon my bed, and thought upon thee when I was waking?"[2] And in another place, O Lord, my heart is ready, my heart is ready.[3] As if his trust was, that God would accept the readiness of his heart; wherefore the mind beating upon a remembrance of Christ's passion, shall mitigate in part the body's pains.

Now is the time that Timothy, a good soldier, should fight, by St. Paul's example, a good fight, keep the faith, and so finish his course: for after all, there is a crown of glory reserved for God's children.[4] This is the last scene of all the comedy; when a little brunt is overpast, troubles cease, but joys never cease. And therefore a good remembrance that we are going from the darkness of this world to the land of the living, where is no night, no need of the candle, nor light of the sun, for God giveth them light, and they shall reign for evermore. "Hold thy peace, Babylon! (saith Epiphanius,) and be mute, O Sodom! because that article, 'I believe life everlasting,' is clear, and consequently bringeth comfort to God's children."[5] But let us

[9] Jon. ii. 1, 2. [1] Sus. 35. [2] Ps. lxiii. 6.
[3] Ps. cviii. 1. [4] 2 Tim. iv. [5] Epiph. Epist. 32, 3.

hearken to Christ himself, "I am the resurrection and the life (saith the Lord): whosoever believeth in me, yea, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall not die for ever."[6] O joy of joys! we lay us down to sleep, and take our rest to dwell in safety.

And here we may not omit to call to mind the manner how God's servants of old have shut up the day of their mortality. As first, that of Moses, who after beholding the land of promise, blessed God for all his benefits, blesseth the people, and so dieth.[7] That of Joshua, who exhorteth Israel to fear God, to stand stedfastly in all his ordinances[8], and so mildly goeth the way of all the world.[9] That of David, who enjoineth Solomon his son to walk in the ways of God, that so he might prosper in whatsoever he took in hand.[1] That of Tobit, who called his son and his son's sons, exhorting them to be merciful and just, that it might go well with them.[2] That of St. Stephen, who, praying for his persecutors, and calling upon the name of Jesus, fell asleep[3]; and after this manner have the godly taught us to depart this world. That of Serapion, "a good and faithful old man

[6] John xi. 25.
[7] Deut. xxxiii. 1; xxxiv. 5.
[8] Josh. xxiii. 11.
[9] Josh. xxiv. 29.
[1] 1 Kings ii. 2.
[2] Tob. xiv. 9.
[3] Acts vii. 60.

(saith Eusebius), who after receiving the holy Eucharist, most meekly departed the world."[4] Now for things transitory, they leave us and we them, the soul only remaineth to be commended unto God. If, when thou art going a journey, thou wouldest be glad to commit thy temporal goods to such a friend, by whom thou mayest be sure they shall be well and safely kept, how much more may the Christian man comfort himself, in committing his soul to the custody of Jesus Christ his Saviour, who will keep it sure and safe for ever! Reuben said of Benjamin, when Jacob was loth to let him go, Deliver him unto me, and I will bring him safely home.[5] So of Christ it may be more rightly said: Commend thy departing soul unto Him, and He will bring it unto her long and blessed home.

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## CHAPTER XX.

*In what manner the sick should be directed by those to whom this weighty business doth specially appertain.*

Amongst men those whom God hath set apart to help distressed consciences, to loose or pronounce remission in his mercy, to[6]

[4] Euseb. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 45.
[5] Gen. xlii. 37. [6] Num. vi. 23.

bless in his name, to teach his people, and to do them good in times of need; partly by matter of exhortation, and partly also by offering up, in their behalf, devout prayers towards the throne of grace,—in the visitation of the sick, so high a work of mercy, they are occasioned, if ever, to enter most seriously into the exercise of both. That care may be thought to be of greatest importance, which is employed in helping them who be now least able to help themselves, and had never more need (God knows) of ghostly direction. There is nothing which the sick in these extremities, do more desire against the natural terrors of death, and many troubles of conscience, which at this time are wont to assault them. It is greatly to be wished, that, like as the Serpent, (that old enemy of mankind, who the shorter the time is, the fiercer his wrath is, and chiefly intendeth ruin unto the heel, as the last part of man's life,) is at this time busy[7]; so those who, in loving, feed, and in feeding, love Christ's lambs[8], should now be most careful to keep them from this devouring lion[9]; and endeavour to present them, sound in faith, hope, and charity, unto the great Bishop and Shepherd of their souls.[1] Notwithstanding that the good grace of that Spirit which directeth our highest proceedings, can better

[7] Rev. xii. 12. [8] John xxi. 15. [9] 1 Pet. v. 8.
[1] 1 Pet. ii. 25.

direct a discreet and sober agent in this case, than all forms of direction whatsoever ; yet, as in other duties, so in this, some advertisements may be observed by those, who are content also to hear the advice of others.

First, therefore, death being that which all men suffer (but not all after one sort), care ought to be had answerable unto the disposition of the dying. Tediousness of discourse may soon weary the weak party ; a few words, and those sometimes in private, well ordered, are wont for the most part to avail most. Impertinent speeches very unfit the presence oftentimes of those who have been associate in folly : yea sometimes the presence of those who are nearest in alliance removed, is thought by grave judgment to be the fittest opportunity for the giving of soul-counsel, bearing a simple and honest intent to do good.[2] A premeditated exhortation, after information taken of the disposition of the sick, is very behoveful. This loose and slight huddling up of Divine matters, and sometimes of God's mysteries themselves, doth often bring in contempt the high wisdom of Holy Scripture, which, but with all reverence, watchfulness, and prayer, none should presume to search and open. This disposing, then, of the sick

[2] [There seems to be some obscurity here.—Ed.]

unto a Christian end being a work of such moment, they may proceed to whom this shall appertain, in this or the like manner.

*And first,*

*Care is taken that the sick,*

1. Now make a most sincere and humble confession of all his sins.

2. That he be content with all his heart, to live or die, as it shall seem good to God's divine pleasure.

3. That he be resolved to make a hearty reconciliation with the world, desiring forgiveness, and forgiving all offences whatsoever amongst men.

4. That he take in good part this visitation sent unto him, to prepare him to die leisurably, God's servant.

5. That he wholly commend him to God's mercy, in the only mediation of Christ Jesus his Saviour.

*Secondarily,*

*Let care be had that the sick may be moved to call to mind,*

1. That all, of what state and condition soever, must depart this transitory world.

2. That God's children throughout the volume of Holy Scriptures, and examples of ancient writers, have willingly yielded themselves at the time of their visitation.

3. That Christ Himself went not up into glory, but first He passed through death.

4. That the death of the servants of God is precious in his sight, and that they rest from their labours.

*These demands may be proposed to the sick :*

1. Whether he acknowledge the faith of the Holy Trinity, with the articles of the Creed, and in this faith be resolved to live and die.

2. Whether he be sorry for his sins, and ask God forgiveness with a penitent heart, in the merits of Christ Jesus.

To which confession of faith God sendeth him this message, "Go in peace."

*The sick should be willed seriously to consider,*

1. That Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance : He is a sinner, therefore for him.

2. That He was the very Lamb of God, that came to take away the offences of the world.

3. That He is a refuge for all them that be weary and heavy laden.

4. That He is our righteousness.

5. That if he [the sick man] live, he liveth unto the Lord : and if he die, he dieth unto the Lord : whether he live or die, he is the Lord's.

*He may be requested to say with*

1. The prophet David: "Lord, remember thy servant in all his troubles."
2. The publican: "God be merciful to me a sinner."
3. The woman of Canaan: "Jesus, thou Son of David, have pity on me."
4. Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall rise again, and see God, not with other, but with the self-same eyes."
5. St. Stephen: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and to say: "I am that wounded man; Blessed Samaritan, heal me: I am that wandering child, that is not worthy to be called thy son; Father, make me thy meanest servant: I am the lost sheep; O seek and save me: bring me home, Lord, unto thy heavenly fold."
6. To mention the words of Christ upon the cross: "Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

*Let him also say:*

Jesus, give me

1. Patience in my trouble.
2. Comfort in my afflictions.
3. Strength in thy mercies.
4. Deliverance at thy pleasure.

*If the sick be*

1. Not able to pronounce them himself, let the articles of the Creed be recited in his presence, by some other; "I believe in God," &c.

2. Distempered, as the best may be, in burning fevers and otherwise, choler shooting up into the brain, and the malignant humour meeting with the vital powers, which may cause raving; let him in a few words be moved to remember God, and the assembly may softly pray by him.

3. Troubled with strange visions, as good men have been, beseech him in the name of God to call to mind the abundant love of Jesus Christ crucified.

4. Pensive and sorrowful, mention the joys of heaven, whither he shall go by God's grace; and the troubles of this sinful world, which he hath often felt, and may now very thankfully leave.

*Read by the sick*

The history of the passion; Luke xxii. xxiii.

The eight and twentieth Psalm; "Unto thee, O Lord."

The 42d Psalm; "Like as the hart desireth the water streams," &c.

The 143d Psalm; "Hear my prayer, O Lord."

The 14th chapter of St. John's Gospel.
The 7th chapter of the Revelation.
The 15th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians.

*If the sick be painfully grieved or strangely visited,*

1. Let not any censure him, as Job's friends, who thought Job a hypocrite, because of his affliction.[3]

2. Or as those that told our Saviour of the Galileans, who judged them greater sinners than the rest, because the tower of Siloah fell upon them.[4]

3. Or as the barbarians, who deemed St. Paul an evil man, because the viper clave unto him.[5]

4. Let none be glad when his enemy falleth, lest the Lord see it, and it displease him.[6]

5. Let every one remember that of Joseph, "Am not I also under the hand of God?"[7]

6. That of the Apostle in the Romans: "Weep with them that weep."[8]

7. That of the wise man: "Be not slow to visit the sick."[9]

8. That of St. James: "Pray one for another."[10]

[3] Job iv. 7; xxii. 6.
[4] Luke xiii. 4.
[5] Acts xxviii. 4.
[6] Prov. xxiv. 17.
[7] Gen. l. 19.
[8] Rom. xii. 15.
[9] Ecclus. vii. 35.
[10] James v. 16.

*A form of leaving the Sick to God's protection.*

The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble: the name of the God of Jacob defend thee, send thee help from his sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Sion. Jesus Christ, the Son of the eternal God, put his blessed passion between thy sins and judgment to come. God the Holy Ghost be thy comfort, to and at thy end. *Amen.*

The sick may sometimes be left to silent meditation, and apply himself thereunto in the name of the Holy Trinity.

Let him also sometimes commend himself to rest with these meditations:

*A form of Prayer to be used for the Sick by them that are present.*

Most merciful Lord, we are at this present constrained to pray for other, who are not worthy to pray for ourselves, beseeching Thee in the multitude of thy mercies, to look down from heaven, and behold thy servant here visited with sickness. Enlighten his mind; preserve his sense; continue thy grace; assuage his pain; and if it be thy good pleasure, prolong his days, as Thou diddest the days of Hezekiah: if otherwise, receive him unto thy ark of mercy. In the meanwhile, give him patience in trouble,

comfort in affliction, constancy in temptations, and victory against his ghostly enemies. Let the blood of thy dear Son wash and cleanse all the spots and foulness of his sins. Let thy righteousness hide and cover his unrighteousness. Let that joyful voice be heard of Him, "Thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Grant this, O Lord, for the honour and glory of thy holy name, through the same Jesus Christ, our only Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

*A Prayer to be used by the Sick himself.*

O Lord Jesus, who art the resurrection and the life, in whom whosoever believeth shall live though he die, I neither desire the continuance of this mortality, nor a more speedy deliverance, but only commend myself wholly to thy will. Do with me, most merciful Saviour, according to the riches of thy goodness: through Thee have I been holpen ever since I was born: it grieveth me that I have so often offended thy goodness, and I am grieved that I grieve no more. Lord, as an humble suitor, I appeal unto the throne of mercy, and there beg at thy hands remission of all my sins, in the merits of thy bitter passion. I offer unto Thee a penitent heart for the time past, and promise amendment, if it shall please thy Divine wisdom to

continue on this my pilgrimage, for the time to come, wherein I refer myself wholly to thy heavenly will; in hope of a better resurrection unto everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

### *Another Prayer for the Sick.*

Almighty and everlasting God, Maker of mankind, which dost correct those whom Thou dost love, and chastenest every one whom Thou receivest; receive, O Lord, we beseech Thee, thy servant here visited with sickness, distrusting in his own merits, and trusting in thy mercies. Look upon him, O Lord as Thou didst upon Hezekiah: restore unto him his former health, if it be thy will, or otherwise give him grace to take this sickness patiently, that after this life, ended in thy faith and love, he may dwell with Thee in life everlasting; unto which life vouchsafe to bring him and us, and all thy humble servants, for thy infinite mercies' sake. *Amen.*

## CHAPTER XXI.

*Wherein is laid down the manner of commending the sick into the hands of God, at the hour of death.*

God the Father, who hath created thee, God the Son, who hath redeemed thee, God the Holy Ghost, who hath infused his grace into thee, assist thee in all thy trials, and lead thee the way into everlasting peace.

*Answer*, Amen.

Christ that died for thee, keep thee from all evil. Amen.

Christ that redeemed thee, strengthen thee in all temptations. Amen.

Christ that loved thee so dearly, raise thee, body and soul, in the resurrection of the just. Amen.

Christ that sitteth at the right hand of God in heaven, bring thee unto everlasting joy. Amen.

God grant thy place may be in Abraham's bosom. Amen.

God grant thou mayest behold thy blessed Saviour in the state of glory. Amen.

God grant thy death may be precious in his sight, in whom thou art to rest for ever. Amen.

*A brief form of Prayer.*

Most merciful Father, we commend unto Thee this thy servant, the work of thine own hands; we commend unto Thee his soul, in the merits of Christ Jesus his Redeemer. Accept, O Lord, thine own creature; forgive, we beseech Thee, whatsoever hath been committed by human frailty, and command thy angels to bring him to the land of everlasting peace. *Answer*, Amen.

Preserve, O Lord, the soul of thy servant, as Thou diddest Noah in the flood. Amen.

Preserve, O Lord, the soul of thy servant, as Thou diddest Lot from the fire of Sodom. Amen.

Preserve, O Lord, the soul of thy servant, as Thou diddest Job in all his adversities. Amen.

Preserve, O Lord, the soul of thy servant, as thou diddest the Israelites from the power of Pharaoh, and the oppression of Egypt. Amen.

Preserve, O Lord, the soul of thy servant, from the malice of Satan, as thou diddest David from all his enemies. Amen.

Preserve, O Lord, the soul of thy servant, as Thou diddest Daniel from the mouth of the lions. Amen.

Preserve, O Lord, the soul of thy servant,

as thou diddest the three children from the fiery flames. Amen.

Preserve, O Lord, the soul of thy servant, as thou diddest Elijah from the false prophets, that sought his overthrow. Amen.

Preserve, O Lord, the soul of thy servant, and deliver him, as thou diddest thy apostles out of prison. Amen.

From that rueful darkness,
Deliver him, O Lord.

From the pains of hell,
Deliver him, O Lord.

From everlasting malediction,
Deliver him, O Lord.

By thy nativity,
O Lord, deliver him.

By thy cross and passion,
O Lord, deliver him.

By thy descension into hell,
O Lord, deliver him.

By thy resurrection from the dead the third day,
O Lord, deliver him.

By thy ascension into heaven,
O Lord, deliver him.

Into thy merciful hands, O heavenly Father, we commend the soul of thy servant now departing; acknowledge, we beseech Thee, a sheep of thine own fold, a lamb of thy own flock. Receive him into the arms of

thy mercy; knowing the thing cannot perish which is committed to thy charge, O most merciful Jesu, receive, we beseech thee, his spirit in peace. Amen.

*The blessing of the Sick.*

Jesus Christ absolve thee from all thy sins.
*Answer,* Amen.

Jesus Christ that died for thee, put out all thy offences. Amen.

Jesus Christ that calleth thee, receive thee into his heavenly kingdom. Amen.

The Lord bless thee and keep thee.

The Lord make his face to shine upon thee.

The Lord lift up his countenance over thee, and give thee a joyful resurrection to life everlasting. Amen.

Depart, O Christian soul, in the name of God the Father, who created thee, of God the Son, who redeemed thee, of God the Holy Ghost, who sanctified thee, one living and immortal God; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

*A Prayer to be used by the assembly at the time of the Christian man's departure.*

*Let us pray.*

O Almighty and everlasting God, seeing it hath pleased Thee to take this thy servant out of the miseries of a sinful world, unto thy

heavenly kingdom, for which, Lord, thy name be blessed: Make us, we beseech Thee, that yet remain, mindful of our mortality, that we may walk before Thee in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life; and when the time of our departure shall come, we may rest in Thee, as our hope is this thy servant doth; that we with him, and all other departed in the faith of thy holy name, may rejoice together in thy eternal glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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## CHAPTER XXII.

*An exhortation to comfort those who lament and mourn for the departure of others.*

To use mourning for the dead, decency amongst men and Christianity doth allow it: examples of Holy Scriptures do approve as much. What more seemly than the performance of the duty, whereby we give testimony of natural affection, in the solemn departure each from other? God hath neither made us stocks nor stones, nor given us hearts which should have no feeling, when occasions offered, or times beseeming require sorrowful affections. On the contrary, what more uncomely, than to use mirth in

the house of mourning? A very heathenish manner was it thought to be, by the decree of an ancient council[1], to sport at these motives to mourning. For examples in holy Scripture, we find that Abraham mourned for Sarah[2]; all Israel for Samuel[3]; the people in the wilderness for Aaron their high-priest[4]; the inhabitants of Bethulia, for Judith, that honourable widow[5]; the Maccabees, for their noble captain[6]; Martha and Mary for Lazarus their brother[7]; the women of Jurie, for their tender children, those young infants[8]; the twelve patriarchs, for Jacob their aged father[9]; David, for Jonathan his trusty and faithful friend.[10] "Nay, Christ Himself," saith St. Jerome, "went not to his sepulchre without weeping eyes." Neither hath this mourning been a light passion only. Great was the lamentation that Jacob made at the supposed death of his son Joseph, when he said, "I will go unto the grave to my son, sorrowing."[11] Great was the lamentation that David made when news was brought him of Absalom's end: "O Absalom, Absalom, my son Absalom: I would to God I had died for thee."[12] Great was the lamentation which

[1] Concil. Arel. 3. sub Leo I.
[2] Gen. xxiii. 2.
[3] 1 Sam. xxv. 1.
[4] Num. xx. 29.
[5] Jud. xvi. 24.
[6] 1 Mac. ix. 20, 21.
[7] John xi. 31.
[8] Matt. ii. 18.
[9] Gen. l. 14.
[10] 2 Sam. i. 17.
[11] Gen. xxxvii. 35.
[12] 2 Sam. xviii. 33

the widows made by Dorcas, so good a woman, full of good works and alms[1], when they considered her bounty towards them. And thus we see the laudable custom and practice in mourning for the dead. When the apostle forbad the Thessalonians to sorrow[2], he did not absolutely forbid all sorrowing, but only after the manner of the Gentiles. "We blame not," saith St. Bernard, "the affection itself, but the excess, or want of moderation."[3] We may not only use moderate sorrow in the departure of others, but even in the departure of the godly and well-disposed themselves. For as good men often are, and in regard of their great miss in the world, where they had been many ways helpful unto others, may be mourned for of many; which is a testimony of their need, who have left but few such behind; so it is a sign of some ill dealing amongst men, when the poor and distressed let them go away without any lamentation at all. It was said by the prophet Jeremy to Jehoiakim, "So long as thy father did help the oppressed, did he not prosper?"[4] And after, he added this, as a great punishment to be laid upon him:

[1] Acts ix. 39. [2] 1 Thess. iv. 13.

[3] Non culpamus affectum, sed excessum.—*Bern. in Cant. serm.* 26.

[4] Jer. xxii. 16.

"Well, thou shalt die in grief of mind, and there shall be none to make lamentation for thee."

The apostle confesseth in plain words, that God had mercy on him in sparing Epaphroditus[5], lest he should have had sorrow upon sorrow; to show that he was not so unnatural but himself should have had feeling in such a case. "My son," saith the Wise Man, "pour forth thy tears over the dead, and neglect not his burial."[6] Whence we may gather, that funeral rites, decent interring, exequies, and seemly mourning, is not unfitting the practice of those amongst whom all things should be done in order.[7]

The Israelites, in burying so honourably their fathers and governors, did show themselves a people of good and orderly disposition. "My son," saith Tobit, "when I am dead, bury me honestly."[8] The new sepulchre, the clean linen clothes, the sweet ointments, the assembly of men of reputation, showed how our Saviour was respectively regarded, and entombed with some solemnity. And sure these bodies, which have been the temples of the Holy Ghost, and shall be changed at the day of doom into a condition of glory, should have that decency performed as is

[5] Phil. ii. 27.
[6] Ecclus. xxxviii. 16.
[7] 1 Cor. xiv. 40.
[8] Tob. xiv. 10.

agreeable, both to practice and conveniency. Wherefore not to yield [to] the dead (after a cynic manner), comely burials, or Christian mourning with moderation, is most inhuman; is a conceit, to say truth, very barbarous.

Notwithstanding this Christian sorrow, yet to sorrow as men without hope, is far distant from the rule of faith; which tells us, that "the death of the saints is precious in God's sight."[9] They are at peace, and that their hope is full of immortality. He that said, "My son, pour forth thy tears over the dead[1]," said also, "Comfort thyself." And surely of all others, Christians, who believe the resurrection unto a better life, should raise up themselves by faith, from too doleful passions; for as in all other things, so in this, a moderation should be had. Have we lost a good father, friend, husband, wife, or children? we may say with Job, "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away."[2] Neither are they yet clean taken from us, but gone a little before the way wherein we must all follow. We shall one day meet again, at which meeting (saith Cyprian) there will be no mean joy, when friends come to rejoice together.[3] Our knowledge is now but in

[9] Ps. cxvi. 15.
[2] Job i. 21.
[1] Ecclus. xxxviii. 17.
[3] Cypr. de Mort.

part, then shall we know as we are known, where Peter shall be Peter, and Paul shall be Paul, and many long since departed, shall (as some of the ancient Fathers say[4]) be known of us that have lived long after. But of all other means of comfort, that happy hope of the resurrection should raise us up from overpensive thoughts. Christ our Saviour, before his passion, when He saw the disciples sorrowful for his departure, which was so shortly to ensue, saith unto them, "Let not your hearts be troubled, I go unto the Father."[5] So it may be said to those that mourn for the miss of others, Let not your minds be too much plunged in sorrow; those for whom you thus lament are gone unto their merciful Redeemer. It is said of Enoch, because his soul pleased God, God took him away.[6] It was spoken as a blessing to Josiah, that he should be gathered unto his fathers before the captivity of the people came.[7] St. Jerome of sinful times saith[8], "Nepotian is a happy man, that lives not to see this wicked world."

When God ships his Noahs[9], it is a sign there is a flood not far behind; when God

[4] Aug. Cyr.
[5] John xiv. 28.
[6] Gen. v. 24.
[7] 2 Kings xxii. 20.
[8] Felix Nepotianus, qui hæc non videt.—*Hiero. ad Hel.*
[9] Gen. vii. 1.

sends angels to fetch his Lots out of Sodom[1], it is sign there is a punishment for the sinful cities shortly to ensue: when God takes Lazarus to Abraham's bosom[2], there is then no more penury to endure. Wherefore, seeing we are all to pass down the stream of mortality, we may not think it so strange to have experience thereof. If we complain of the death of friends, we complain, in effect, that they were born mortal. Death is as the lines drawn from the centre unto the circumference, even on every part; or as the upright magistrate, equal to all; which may the rather move us to be content. The good-meaning borrower, the sooner his debt is discharged, the sooner is he at quiet. He that makes but a short voyage, and is the soonest at the haven of rest, is the sooner also from danger of shipwreck. We may not forget to conform our wills to the will of God, as we daily pray, "Thy will be done."[3] The wise man praised the dead above the living. And St. John pronounced them "blessed which die in the Lord, because they now rest from their labours[4]," and therefore their good estate now obtained, should the rather move us to remember their good. At our entrance into the world, we brought with us a subjection

[1] Gen. xix. 1.
[2] Luke xvi. 22.
[3] Luke xi. 3.
[4] Rev. xiv. 13.

unto death; again, all sinned, and therefore death goeth over all; and return we must to the place from whence we came, this world being our banishment for a time, from which these blessed souls, now freed, would tell us (were they to return into these earthly regions, which, without controversy, they do not,) that they, with Mary, "have chosen the better part."[5] We here, with Martha, "are careful about many things;" they have the one thing which is necessary, that shall never be taken from them. How to accept of, and take in good part, as we may, the loss as we count it, or rather miss for a time, of friends departed, the behaviour of David in this case may be considered; who, when the child was sick, fasteth, prayeth, prostrateth himself upon the earth; but hearing that God's will was accomplished in the death of the child, David rose up, ate bread, received comfort, as it seemed, after all his sorrow: being demanded the cause of this diversity of behaviour, answered, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, Who can tell whether God will have mercy on me, that the child may live; but, being dead, wherefore should I now fast? can I bring him again any more? I shall go unto him, but he shall not return unto me."[6]

[5] Luke x. 42. [6] 1 Sam. xii. 21.

In the like case, St. Bernard, being not a little moved for the death of one; "I turned me (saith he,) to prayer and weeping; at last I considered that God had done what seemed best in his divine providence, what should more sorrowing avail? Lord, Thou hast taken thine, none of mine: tears forbad me to speak further: and so the good Father resolved to rest content with the will of God.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

*How those that undertake any dangerous attempts, either by sea or land, wherein they are in peril of death, should, specially beforehand make themselves ready for God.*

If those men who live in times and places of most safety, should, respecting the uncertainty of human condition, think every day of their last day, which by little and little will come upon them: then how much more ought those who enter into places of apparent peril, [and] undertake attempts of greatest danger, to stand upon their guard, and be well provided for, to be ready for God! Heathen men could tell Jonas, that in this case there was no other refuge but to fly unto the assistance of some superior power.[7] Pharaoh himself could

[7] Jonah i. 6.

entreat Moses to pray for him[8]; how much more then should those, whose hope reacheth further than the saving or preservation of a life mortal, entering into any attempt wherein they are in hazard, [pray] with Judith, who first worshipped God with all devotion, and then went forth for the deliverance of Bethulia?[9] Faith and trust in God doth not make men cowards, but rather addeth spirit and comfort in greatest assaults of enemies. "By faith (saith the Apostle,) Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae, and also David, of weak were made strong, waxed valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of aliens[10]," who came against God's people with great force and multitudes. While they were arming themselves with sword and shield, the manner of God's people was to arm them with devotion, and a religious commending themselves, either in life or death, to God's protection. When Balak saw the people of Israel to prosper more by their praying than he could by his strongest forces, he would needs have Balaam to curse them.[1] Moses (saith St. Jerome) fought as well as Joshua against Amalek[2], for while Moses held up his hands Israel prevailed.[3] Ruffinus and Socrates write, that when Theodosius, the Christian emperor, in a

[8] Exod. viii. 8.
[9] Judith ix. 1.
[10] Heb. xi. 32—34.
[1] Numb. xxii. 5.
[2] Iero. ad Heliod.
[3] Exod. xvii. 11.

great battle against Eugenius, he saw the huge multitude that was coming against him, (and so in the sight of man there was apparent overthrow at hand,) he gets him up into a place eminent, or in the sight of all the army, falls down prostrate upon the earth, beseecheth God, if ever He would look upon a sinful creature, to help him at this time of greatest need; suddenly there rose a mighty wind, which blew the darts of the enemies back upon themselves, in such wonderful manner, as Eugenius, with all his host, was clean discomfited; who saw that the power of Christ fought for his people, and therefore cried, in effect as the Egyptians did[4]: "O! God is in the cloud!" or "God fighteth for them."[5] Thus with faith and constancy have the servants of God gone forth against their enemies, with all devotion, and a thorough preparing of themselves either for life or death, as it should best stand with the good pleasure of God.

For those, therefore, that undertake any attempt, either by sea or land, wherein life more than ordinary is endangered, let them in the name of God go forth, with souls prepared; for in so doing they remember themselves to have a further expectation, than either the gaining or losing of a life temporal.

[4] Ruff. Soc. Eccles. Hist. [5] Exod. xiv. 25.

"Let extreme necessity (saith Emisenus), find them ready which is wont to oppress men unprepared."[6] In worldly affairs we oftentimes forget heavenly; and therefore good reason that, in heavenly, we should also go aside from all earthly cogitations, and, presenting ourselves before God, commend, in solemn manner, our souls into his hands; which done, with Esther, we may say, "If we perish, we perish; now the will of God be fulfilled."[7] So, therefore, of preparing themselves before any attempt of danger, it may be said, as St. John saith, "Here is wisdom."[8]

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

*A brief direction for such as are suddenly called to depart this world.*

Concerning prayer for the deliverance from sudden death, somewhat hath been before mentioned, and their hard censure, who are ever hasty in this cause to judge others, in part answered. Now for him, who upon short warning is willing to die, this brief

[6] Paratos inveniat extrema necessitas, quæ sæpe opprimit imparatos.—*Ens. Em. hom.* 1. *ad Mon.*

[7] Est. iv. 16. [8] Rev. xiii. 18.

direction may suffice. First, let not the suddenness dismay him, for that unto a well-disposed man it is no suddenness at all, how soon soever he depart. Secondarily, that God hath his penny for those that come at the eleventh hour: and an acceptance for the servants, that are found stirring at the second or third watch; He hath Paradise for him that will call in his dying fits, Lord, remember me in thy heavenly kingdom. With Mary Magdalene, to give God at once the sacrifice of a sorrowful spirit, shall, with Abel's offering, go upward and be acceptable unto God. We must let this little thread of life twine out until our clue be all ended. When the ship is covered with waves, then Help, Master; when a good remembrance of Jesus Christ shall not return void. Abraham had but an intention in his mind concerning Isaac, to offer him, and yet the Apostle to the Hebrews saith, "By faith Abraham offered up Isaac[9]," as if the deed had been done, when his intention was good to do it. Whereby we see that God doth accept a good meaning heart, which is all we can offer at these times. The mercy of man extends itself unto his neighbour, saith the wise man, but the mercy of God reacheth to all flesh; and both can and will save in a

[9] Heb. xi. 17.

moment: wherefore this suddenness may not either give occasion to others to judge uncharitably, or unto the patients themselves, to be discomforted for want of time. It doth not hurt good men, how suddenly soever they are called away[1]; so they depart when God calleth them; which time all must tarry. For as the pleasures of this world should not cause us to be altogether addicted to the same, so also the miseries of life should not cause any, how deeply distressed soever, distrustfully to fly away, or desperately, with Saul, to incur his own danger: which foul attempts nature herself doth abhor; but Christianity doth utterly condemn. To be any way accessary unto our own decay, or much less principal, O God forbid! Fie upon that discontent, or faithless cowardliness, to run away, or to fly, where no fear is. God is a sure refuge, and will never fail: God is a present help in trouble. He that brought us into the world, should have the calling us from the world; at whose calling we may meekly depart as becometh us. Abridge the time we may not; we ought not, for all the afflictions that may betide the sons of men. The laws of nations have forbid in this case the benefit of decent burial, to terrify men from this shameful act of casting away them-

[1] Non nocet bonis, si subito moriantur.—*Ansel.*

selves desperately. At the very motions whereof, the true Christian is wont to say, as Christ said unto the tempter in the wilderness: Avoid, Satan.

Thus therefore an humble submitting ourselves to God's pleasure, and also a faithful commending our souls into his hands, how soon soever we are called to depart, is that direction which we should put in practice by the assisting help of God's blessed grace.

*A prayer to be used of any, who finds himself troubled in conscience, or disquieted by evil motions.*

Strengthen me, O Lord, against all mine enemies, both bodily and ghostly, that they never be able to say, We have prevailed against him. My spirit is sorrowful, my heart is sad and heavy within me; if Thou be not my comfort, I shall surely perish in my trouble. For thy name's sake, O Lord, have mercy upon me, rise up to help me, that having help in Thee, I may withstand my mortal adversary, and say, Depart from me, thou wicked spirit, that bringest evil thoughts, and this dejection of mind: go from me, thou deceiver of man, thou shalt have no part in me; for my Saviour Jesus standeth by me, as a strong champion, and thou shalt fly away to thy confusion: I had

rather endure all affliction, all punishments and infamy of the world, than consent to the malicious motions; be still, therefore, thou wicked spirit, cease thy provokements to evil; I shall never assent unto thee, though greater troubles than these come upon me; our Lord is my light, and my health, whom shall I dread? He is the defender of my life, of whom then shall I be afraid? Though an host of men set themselves against me, though infinite calamities overcome me, I shall not be discomforted; for why, God is my helper and Redeemer, in whom I trust; He is my portion. To whom be praise and honour, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

*A prayer for a good departure out of this world.*

Eternal God and most merciful Father, seeing that the days of man are as the flower of the field, that soon fadeth, and his time like a shadow that vanisheth away; considering we are all strangers, as were our forefathers, and have here no continuing city; make us evermore, Lord, we beseech Thee, mindful of our mortality, that like wise virgins we may provide oil in our lamps, to be ready against the bridegroom's coming; and that, tarrying thy good pleasure, like watchful servants, we may be so doing, whensoever the master shall return. And when sickness

summoneth us to be gone, grant, we beseech Thee, that neither the infirmity of the flesh, nor the sharpness of affliction, nor any other means whatsoever, remove us from a true and stedfast hope in the blessed passion of thy dear Son Christ Jesus. And when the hour of our rest is come, grant, O Lord, we may commend ourselves into thy hands, and die thy servants, to the glory of thy name, and comfort of our souls, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

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## CHAPTER XXV.

*A consolatory admonition for those who are often overmuch grieved at the crosses of this world.*

"If the world hate you," saith Christ our Saviour unto his disciples, "you know it hated me before it hated you."[1] That heaviness might not dismay or cast them down without hope of deliverance, where He proposeth the one He promiseth the other; "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall receive comfort."[2] Are not those happy tears, well distilled from the alembic of a sorrowful heart, that shall have the hands of the Son of God Himself to

[1] John xv. 18. [2] Matt. v. 4.

wipe them clean away?[3] When all flesh, saith Moses, had corrupted his ways, it repented the Lord He had made man[4], that is, God was sorry that man, created to so excellent an end, should himself destroy himself. Now God sends a deluge upon the face of our earthly pleasures: these floods of tears extinguish the heat of unlawful desires, cleanse the corruption of our sinful lives: when all is overpast there ensueth a calm. The Church well celebrateth solemn and sanctified feasts, as public memorials of Christ's blessed birth, his resurrection, his ascension, and many others; before which feasts she appointeth the evenings to be fasted: in this world we fast the even; we shall keep holiday when we come to heaven. Our Lord and Master, Christ Jesus, as He did seldom laugh in the world, so did the world as seldom laugh upon Him. He tells his followers they must become as little children[5]: little children, we know, have no other weapons to avenge themselves but their tears; and what other have we, against our crosses of this world, but our sighs and supplications sent up to God?

Job saith, "Before I eat, I sigh[6];" whose suffering was such, that all which we do or

[3] Rev. vii. 17.
[4] Gen. vi. 6.
[5] Matt. xviii. 3.
[6] Job iii. 24.

can suffer (saith St. Jerome), is, in effect, nothing.[7] We may not look to find God in the gardens of Egypt, whom Moses found in the thorny bush of manifold tribulations.[8] To be without crosses we may rather wish than hope. The golden world is gone, wherein men did joy in nothing more than in sincerity and love. Now this iron age of ours yieldeth store of crosses and unconscionable wrongs; such is the calamity of our time. Well; "heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."[9] We may not repine at these trials; if we desire to solace ourselves in the vanities of this world, our desires are unlawful. Lot's wife, her mind was upon her substance in Sodom[1]; she looked backward, but she never looked forward again, When, with the spider, we have exhausted our very bowels to make a slender web, one puff of wind carries all away: when we have endeavoured to the uttermost to mount aloft, suddenly death doth clip the wings of our soaring endeavours, and down we fall. Did we look back and consider how many are under us, as we are overready to pry how many are above us, we should soon see our estate less grievous than the state of many who are as dear to Christ as ourselves.

[7] Jer. ad Jul. [8] Exod. iii. 2.
[9] Ps. xxx. 5. [1] Gen. xix. 86. Luke xvii. 32.

But ease and pleasure are acceptable to flesh and blood, which the world is wont to promise. Nebuchadnezzar, to draw the people from God's service to foul idolatry, caused the noise of instruments to sound[2]; that so, delighting themselves, they might forget their obedience to God. But is it possible that any delights should draw him from God, for whom the whole frame of the world was made? Should base desires make man unfaithful unto Him, from whom cometh all his good? Joseph said, "Behold, my master hath committed all into my hands; how then can I do this?"[3] As if he could not find in his heart to commit evil against him that had dealt so liberally as his master had done. For these world's vanities, we may let them pass; whatsoever they promise, their pleasure is not permanent. When Jacob was hasting into his own country, Laban followed him and said, "Why didst thou not tell me of thy departure, that I might have let thee go with mirth and melody?" when his meaning was to have kept him still in longer servitude[4]; but as Jacob did well, seeing Laban's countenance once set against him, to make ready to depart into his own country; so when we shall find the world to frown upon us, [we shall do well] to make speed and prepare ourselves to be gone.

[2] Dan. iii. 10. [3] Gen. xxxix. 8. [4] Gen. xxxi. 27.

Notwithstanding the people in the wilderness did drink of the bitter waters of Marah[5], yet in that God appointed his angel to direct them in their way, it was a testimony He would bring them into a better land. God hath given us his Spirit, more than an angel, for our guide, which may bear witness to our spirits, we were not created for this frail and momentary state, but look for better things to come. In the meantime, no calamities of life should make us hate life; the course whereof we may not slack or hasten at our own pleasure. If it did so much revive the hearts of distressed people, that one (and that in vision only) should seem to see Onias[6], who had been high priest, a virtuous and good man, reverent of behaviour, and of a sober conversation, well spoken, and one that had been exercised in points of virtue of a child, holding up his hands to heaven, and praying for them: then to see Jesus Christ Himself at the right hand of God, there to stand for us; merciful Lord, how can it not but raise up our pensive hearts? Elkanah said unto Hannah, when she was sore grieved at the hard usage of the world, "Why is thy heart grieved? am not I better unto thee than ten sons?" This was a speech of comfort to her troubled mind.

[5] Exod. xv. 23.

[6] 2 Macc. xv. 12.

But unto the distressed man, whose joy is in Christ crucified, may it not be said, Is not his love and mercy better unto us all than ten thousand pleasures of a sinful life, who hath said to all that fear and love his name, "In the world you shall have affliction; but be of good comfort, I have overcome the world."[7]

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

*An admonition to all, while they have day and time before them, to make speed to apply themselves to this lesson of learning to die.*

SEEING that "all flesh is grass, and the glory of man but as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, and this flower fadeth away[1]:" how behoveful then it is for all to apply themselves to this lesson of learning to die, the Apostle showeth, when he exhorteth all "to walk wisely, because the days are evil."[2] Our spring is fading, our lamp is wasting, and the tide of our life is drawing by little and little unto a low ebb: whatsoever we do, our wheel whirls

[7] John xvi. 33.
[2] Eph. v. 15, 16.
[1] Isa. xl. 6.

about apace; and in a word, we die daily. Hence may we consider that health is the mart where the provident merchant may lay [out] for his store; strength is the seed time wherein the diligent husbandman may provide for a harvest. He that will never put on sackcloth until, with Ahab, he see God's justice at hand, to require punishment for his sins; he that will never begin to live until he be ready to die, may wish one day he had been better advised, when all the world cannot recall opportunity past.

It is the general practice of Satan, to promise careless sinners time enough; as racking usurers are wont to give day to young heirs from time to time, until at last they wind their inheritance from them. We know not how dangerous it is to defer all unto the last cast. As I will not promise, so I dare not presume (saith St. Austin) of evening repenters. To make all out of doubt, the best course is, to repent betimes. The Holy Ghost saith, "While it is called to-day."[3] The world thought itself never more secure than when they were eating and drinking, when they were planting and building[4]; yet suddenly came the flood and overwhelmed them all. The morning was fair when Lot went

[3] Heb. iii. 15.

[4] Luke xvii. 27.

out of Sodom, and yet before night were the Sodomites destroyed.[5] Nebuchadnezzar thought himself never more sure than when he had builded great Babel[6]; and yet, while the word was in his mouth, God pulled him down upon his knees. The rich man thought himself never more likely to have lived, than when he had viewed his barns, set down in his counting-house, and told over his bags; but yet before twilight his soul was taken from him.[7]

We all know what we have been, we know not what we shall be, or how suddenly we shall be taken from all. Wherefore our Saviour exhorteth us to agree with our adversary quickly, to walk while we have light. And the prophet Isaiah, to seek God while He may be found.[8] "In this life," saith Theodoret, "there is place of grace and mercy; but in that other life, of justice only[9];" which being so, had we not need to seek the Lord early, as Job speaketh? Our Saviour in the Gospel saith, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise[1];" As there is a resurrection unto the life of glory, so is there also a resurrection unto the life of grace.[2]

[5] Gen. xix. 23. [6] Dan. iv. 30.
[7] Luke xii. 20. [8] Isa. lv. 6.
[9] In hac vita locus est gratiæ et misericordiæ, in illa tantum justitiæ. *Theod. in Psal. sext.*
[1] Luke vii. 14. [2] Prov. xxiv. 16.

Sin is a fall: "the righteous falleth," saith the wise man: amendment of life is a resurrection; and "blessed are those that have part in this resurrection." Sin is a kind of death: the father said of his riotous son, "This my son was dead."[3] Sin is a drowsy or heavy sleep: "considering the season," saith the Apostle, "it is now time to arise from sleep[4]:" newness of conversation is a resurrection; and blessed are those that have part in this resurrection. Christ, when He rose, He rose early: Lazarus, that lay four days[5], began to savour; if we lie long in our sins, we shall wax unsavoury too. But with the women that came by times with sweet odours unto the sepulchre, we should bring our prayers and supplications, which are acceptable to the Most Highest. Though we do not yet hear the trump, or voice of the archangel, summoning all to judgment, yet we shall hear with these ears, at the day of doom, that doleful voice, but unto them that take heed in time, joyful, "Arise from the dead, and come to judgment."

Let us not offer the first of our vintage to the delights of sin, and serve God with the lees and dregs of our age. Let us not yield the flower of our life unto the foul affections of sinful nature, and reserve for God the very refuse

[3] Luke xv. 31. [4] Rom. xiii. 11. [5] John xi. 39.

of our time. It is no conquest to overcome a weak and feeble enemy; to resist the pleasures of the flesh, when nature itself is decayed. We should consider that our care is not so much now what to do, as what one day we may wish we had done: wherefore let men pass through this world, as the people did by the land of Edom[6], who only required to go through it, but would make no stay at all. What, should we set our delights in this Edom? our passage through it is all we should require. The chiefest matter we are to attend is, the good hour of our departure. We see by experience, that the longer we defer the curing of wounds, the harder is their recovery at the last. The loss of time is very precious, we have no warrant for the least continuance thereof: "make no tarrying therefore," saith the wise man, "to turn unto the Lord."[7] Lose not any longer therefore good hours; this common case of all flesh passeth so often by us, that at the last it takes us too, as well as others: we may not defer a work of such importance, but with all expedition proceed we in the performance of the same. The apostle St. Paul saith, "Give your bodies a lively sacrifice unto God, your reasonable serving of him."[8] When we repent only in our last extre-

[6] Numb. xx. 17. [7] Ecclus. v. 7. [8] Rom. xii. 1.

mities, we give not a lively, but a dead sacrifice; not our reasonable but our unreasonable serving of God: wherefore, as Christ saith, "Walk, while ye have light[9]:" so may it be said unto every one, Repent while ye have time.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

*The great folly of men in neglecting this opportunity of time offered, to learn to die.*

Did many in the world as much abhor the practice and course in the common life of Sadducees and Epicures, as they are wont to do their profession and name, then would God be more sincerely worshipped than He is; then would the time allotted us to prepare ourselves for the kingdom of heaven be better employed than ordinarily it is wont. We wonder at the whole world, who for all Noah's forewarning of the flood to come, "yet repented not."[1] We marvel at the Jews, who had Christ amongst them, and did not accept Him[2]; but we clean forget ourselves, having as much warning as they. We have Christ amongst us; Jacob said, "Surely the Lord

[9] John xii. 35. [1] Luke xvii. 26, 27. [2] Luke xix. 14.

was in this place, and I was not aware of it."[3] We have time, and health, and grace, the light of his truth; surely God's goodness is upon us, and we are not aware of it; we neglect all, which neglect is dangerous. "Despisest thou," saith the Apostle, "the riches of his bountifulness, and patience, and long-suffering, not knowing that the bountifulness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"[4]—"God is not slack, as some men count slackness, but is patient towards us, and would have no man to perish, but would have all men come to repentance."[5] Wherefore, as Solomon sendeth the sluggard, so may we send the careless sinner to school to the emmet; for she laboureth in the summer, and provideth for the time to come. "I passed," saith he, "by the field of the slothful man, and found it full of briars and brambles[6]:" such is the life of negligent people; untilled, all out of order. They roist and riot out time, moving God to sue them upon an action of waste. They spend their golden days of youth and prosperity, as ill husbands waste and spend their substance, they know not how; and are in a manner so careless, as if God were bound to bring them to heaven, whether they would or no; thinking that all is so

[3] Gen. xxviii. 16. [4] Rom. ii. 4. [5] 2 Pet. iii. 9.
[6] Prov. vi. 6.

sure, as if there were no more care to be had. No, no, St. Paul (who knew better than all the devisors in the world can tell men how to dispose themselves to heaven) willeth "every one that thinks he stands, to take heed lest he fall;" yea, "to work out his salvation with fear and trembling."[7]

The fall of the angels[8], the loss of Adam[9], the rejection of Saul[1], if we consider what hath become of the tallest cedars in Lebanon, we cannot but with fear think of our frail condition. But what speak we of any one in particular? the Jews, that ancient people of God; the churches of Asia, which sometimes flourished; to consider how they are now defaced and brought to ruin, may make all fear sinful security. What? not possible to err? St. Paul told the Romans themselves long since: "Be not high-minded, but fear."[2]—"Blessed is the man that feareth." Our sins may make a separation between God and us. The Jews have not only erred, but fallen away from that God whose love and care they so long enjoyed. "Make your election sure," saith St. Peter, "and give your diligence hereunto; for if you do these things you shall never fall[3];" thereby showing, that our perseverance in the faith and fear of God is that

[7] Phil. ii. 12. [8] 2 Pet. ii. 4. [9] Gen. iii. 23.
[1] 1 Sam. xvi. 1. [2] Rom. xi. 20. [3] 2 Pet. i. 10.

duty, after free justification in mercy, which only He expecteth at their hands. Folly, therefore, is it, to flatter ourselves in a fruitless course of life, and to defer time until it be too late. "If God offer grace to-day," saith St. Austin, "thou knowest not whether He will offer the same to-morrow, and therefore now use it, if thou wilt use it at all."[4] The light will shine when we shall not see the closing in of that day; the evening will come when we shall not see the breaking forth of the morrow light. Lazarus after his want, Dives for all his wealth,—and of "the children of the Most Highest," saith the prophet, "ye shall die like men."[5] Neither is that all; but as St. Peter saith, "which shall give account unto him which is ready to judge both quick and dead[6];" when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed; when the foolish virgins shall cry, "Lord, Lord, open unto us, but it shall be answered and said unto them, I know you not."[7] But as for the wise virgins, which have provided oil in their lamps, they shall lift up their heads, and pass unto that joyful marriage of the Lamb.

Now therefore to conclude, with St. Peter. "Seeing we look for such things, what manner of persons ought we to be in holy conversation

[4] Tract 33. in Joan.
[5] Ps. lxxxii. 6, 7.
[6] 1 Pet. iv. 5.
[7] Matt. xxv. 12.

and godliness?"[8] But it is a hard saying, Learn you; but it will one day be a harder, if men take not heed in time, Get ye hence, depart you. Dispatch therefore about this business of Learning to Die. The tide tarrieth for no man. Our going to such and such a city is upon condition:—"If"—If God will: If we live. To set forward in time is best, these after-wits are not so good.

It were to be wished that men at last would see their folly, and seeing it, endeavour to reform the same. A vain thing is it for any to flatter himself with hope of continuance: we go to our beds, Christ knoweth whether ever we shall arise. For all this, one sin draweth on another, and we never think that secret sins shall come to open judgment. The careless guests made light of their calling to come to the marriage of the king's son[9]; did they not find at last, when they were shut out, there was no jesting with so great a King that sent for them? Christ offereth mercy, (which is our last refuge,) freely, willingly, unto all: now is the accepted time; the flower of our age will away apace; we may be prevented, we know not how soon; death and judgment hasteth: shall we know these things, and neglect opportunity? God forbid.

[8] 2 Pet. iii. 11. [9] Matt. xxii. 5.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

*Wherein is showed, that this learning to die may justly move us to lead a Christian life, in holy conversation and godliness.*

SUNDRY are the reasons which may stir up and quicken our backward dispositions to the dutiful performance of that religious worship. we all owe unto God: to omit the promises, and those in mercy; the threatenings, and those in justice, which the volume of Holy Scripture doth often mention to this end. Moses, to move all the world to acknowledge God, he concluded no other argument but. "these and these are the works of God[2]:" which the Apostle also in effect expoundeth, saying: "that the invisible things of him, to wit, his power and godhead, are seen by the creation of the world."[3] Eliphaz, to express God's majesty, saith, Behold the stars.[4] The Prophet David calleth all the creatures of God to praise God[5], as indeed they do, by their wonderful order and decency of motion. If all creatures serve God,

[2] Gen. i. 3—6. [3] Rom. i. 20. [4] Job xxii. 12.
[5] Ps. cxlviii. 2, 3.

then much more should man, for whom they were all created; and he only for the honourable service of God. Come we unto man, his new birth, there he taketh his covenant-penny to serve his Redeemer, in holiness and righteousness all the days of his life. Consider we his justification and sanctification: there we find him drawn by the cords of love unto this sweet yoke of Christ. It is a maxim in moral philosophy, Every benefit doth require a duty. In nature where the sun doth extend the beams of light, there the solid body hath a reflex of heat. But that which doth often move us, we may remember (as we should never forget) the Author of our health, our wealth, our peace, our prosperity and all,—if these move not, we are inferior unto the insensible creatures, if we should have no reflex of duty.

Ancient histories make mention how much religious and devout-minded men have desired to pass over their days in this world in some private and peaceable course of life. It is said of Paphnutius, that he betook him wholly by this desire to the service of God. John, an Egyptian, of whom St. Jerome speaking, we have seen this John (saith he,) in the ports of Thebais, near the city of Ligo, living so calm and angelical kind of life, as is wonderful, wholly addicting himself to live and die in the service of God.

Now, therefore, if the promises of grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, if the greatness of the reward laid up for them that walk in the way of God's commandments, and keep them with their whole hearts—for is there not a reward for the righteous? then might they well say with the Prophet, "In vain have we washed our hands amongst the innocents[6]"—if promises, I say, and those in mercy, cannot win us to a just remembrance of our estate to come, yet at least to bethink ourselves of this reckoning-day at hand, should somewhat move us in this case.

The rich man, in his scalding torments, hath a "O learn of me[7], take heed in time," for all that swim in worldly pleasures, in sensual delights, the conclusion whereof is sorrow and pain; when they shall say, Would to God we had never offended so gracious a Lord; would to God we had never neglected so favourable a time of grace; would to God we had never followed the follies of a sinful life. The banquet is pleasant, but the shot will prove deep and chargeable after an evil course; and therefore, if there be any consolation in Christ Jesus, any comfort of love, any hope of mercy; if there be any fear or dread of judgment to come, consider we of a future condition; prepare we ourselves for

[6] Ps. lxxiii. 13. [7] Luke xvi. 24.

a life permanent, for an estate of all continuance; and God of his infinite mercy grant all grace so to do.

A special mean, with God's good assistance, to obtain this calm and peaceable course of life, is to withdraw ourselves from the inordinate and excessive cares of this world; from the too much delight in these earthly affairs, which is called by divines a multitude of worldly businesses. St. John saith, "Love not the world[8];" and we know nothing else. "Love it so long as we will," saith St. Ambrose, "it will yield us storms enough[9]." We set our hearts on riches: do they make the possessors ever the quieter, ever the merrier? No, verily: and rich men know I speak true. Would we unburden our minds of some earthly desires, should we not find much peace and quiet? Undoubtedly, we should. Moreover, what doth trouble the world so much as a self-desire to please ourselves? When Elias fled before Jezebel[1], there came a wind, "but the Lord was not in the wind: there came an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake: after the earthquake there came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire: after the fire there came a still soft voice, and the Lord came with the voice." Where a calm

[8] 1 John ii. 15.

[9] Quas non patimur tempestates?—*Ambr. de Spe Resur.*

[1] 1 Kings xix. 11.

and quiet life is, there God is. These tossing and troublesome dispositions, these fiery scorching humours[2], are they from that wisdom that is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without judging, and without hypocrisy, as St. James speaketh? It seemeth not, if we may, as we may (saith he) judge the fountain by the water; or that men would once frame themselves to live religiously, to live peaceably. Christ saith, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you."[3]

In the trial of the holy man Job, Satan saith of him, "Hast thou not hedged him in?"[4] As of these droves of camels and herds of cattle and children, Job is so blessed, as if Job should not bless God, Job were worse than a stock or stone. We see, amongst men, the master requireth service, the captain fight. He that said, "Give unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," said also, "give unto God that which is God's;" which is the reverence and worship of his holy name.

The principal effects, therefore, that this remembrance of our end ought to work in us, is purity and sincerity of life, which doth not consist in some talkative show of a mortified profession, but must be done in truth

[2] James iii. 17. [3] John xiv. 27. [4] Job i. 10.

and verity. The prophet Isaiah, exhorting to the true fruits of contrition, doth not say, Learn to speak well, but "Learn to do well; apply yourselves to equity, deliver the oppressed, help the fatherless to his right, let the widow's complaint come before you."[5] It was our Saviour's own rule, "The works that I do, testify of me."[6] In like manner, the works that proceed from us, do bear witness of us. We must not have the voice of Jacob and the hands of Esau; we must not do as boatmen are wont, who row one way, but look another; talk this way, but live the contrary; nor as foolish merchants, who make a little show outward, but have bare storehouses beneath; but our religious actions are they that must shortly stand by us; the penny is ready for the end of the day, which is drawing on apace.[7] The sun is long since past the meridian line, and we know death will not be answered with an "I pray thee have us excused."[8] We had need bestir ourselves; the time is not long, and we may remember whither we are going.

Foolish virgins think their oil will never be spent. Christ says, "the children of this world are wiser in their generation."[9] Are we so careful for the time to come, as com-

[5] Isa. i. 17.
[6] John x. 25.
[7] Matt. xx. 8.
[8] Luke xiv. 19.
[9] Luke xvi. 8.

monly we are for the time present? I would to God we were.

Last of all, our continuance in this world being only a passage unto that to come, should move us to meditate of the end wherefore God sent us hither, and the condition we expect, when we are departed hence; which departure should daily put us in mind to eschew evil, and do good, to fear God, and keep his commandments.

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

*Wherein is showed, in the last place, that a consideration of Christ's second coming to judgment, ought to move every one to live religiously, and also to apply himself to this lesson of learning to die.*

The manifold reasons before alleged, may induce the careful Christian to live religiously, and to learn to die: the inevitable necessity of death is in itself sufficient: for what Esculapius, or physician, how skilful soever, can make mortality immortal? The radical moisture by little and little will flash so long with the wasting lamp, until the light goeth out, the lamp is spent, and so an end. God Himself doth teach us a consideration of our mortal estate, both by testimonies of his sacred word, as also by many spectacles before our

eyes: so that we do not only hear with our ears, but also behold often with our eyes, both what we are and what we shall be. Many are the events which we may read to have befallen others. The sudden end of Ananias and Sapphira[1], of Anastasius, whom the Church stories do mention, may move the most reckless to remember themselves. The prophet David, mentioning the sudden destruction of those which murmured against God in the wilderness, saith, "While the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them."[2] Of which very instance the apostle saith, "These things came upon them for our example, and are written to admonish us, upon whom the ends of the world are come."[3] If all this be not sufficient, yet a consideration of Christ's second coming to judgment, should at last move every man unto a most serious remembrance of the time to come. That which the Holy Ghost doth set down so often, and is in Scripture forcibly expressed, and that too in many places, so evidently laid before us, the Holy Ghost doth thereby show how diligently the same subject should be considered of by us. Now what more forcibly expressed in the sacred volume than is the se-

[1] Acts v. 10. [2] Ps. lxxviii. 30.
[3] 1 Cor. x. 11.

cond coming of Christ unto judgment, which is called a great day[4], and such a day as never was from the beginning of the world! when the sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light, when the stars shall fall from heaven; when the voice of the trumpet shall sound; when all the kindreds of the earth shall mourn; when they shall see the Son of man come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory; when the sepulchres shall open, when the sea and the earth shall give up their dead; when all the world, kings, princes, and potentates of the earth, shall appear before the tribunal-seat of Christ. (Blessed Lord, what a time shall this be!) "I know not (saith St. Chrysostom) what others do think of it; for myself, it makes me often tremble to consider it."[5] Do[6] we not behold from year to year the sun to yield less heat, whereby the fruits of the earth do less kindly ripen? O that we had hearts to meditate of this great coming of Christ to judgment; then would we soon, for a sinful life past, be avenged upon our eyes,

[4] Joel ii. 31. Joel iii. 15. Dan. vii. 13. Mark xiii. 24. Luke xxi. 25. Matt. xxiv. 29. Isa. xiii. 10. Ezek. xxxii. 7. John v. 22. Rev. xx. 13. Matt. xvi. 27. 2 Cor. v. 10. Rom. xiv. 10.

[5] Chrysost. Hom. 77. in Matt.

[6] This seems to have been a very prevalent opinion at the time.—Ed.

and wish, with Jeremy, that our heads were a fountain of water[7]; then would we say with Demosthenes, yea every one would soon answer the first provocation to evil, I will not buy repentance so dear. To flatter ourselves with hope of deferring of this time, is all in vain: look how the last day of thy life doth leave thee, so shall the day of judgment find thee.

Who would not but accept of the fatherly forewarning of Christ our Saviour, by those many precedent tokens, as forerunners of his coming? These are both sayings and signs: the sayings, amongst others, "that for his elect's sake the days shall be shortened[8];" and, "Behold, I come quickly."[9] For signs, the waxing cold of charity[1], the rising of nation against nation, the abounding of iniquity[1]; without further application, these may be left unto our silent thoughts. Was there ever less love? Where is that Jonathan that loves David as his own soul? Where is that uprightness of conscience, when men, rather for shame of the world than otherwise, abstain from extreme impiety? How many, with Joab, embrace friendly, but carry a malicious heart to Amasa?[2] The apostle saith, "that the latter days shall be perilous days,

[7] Jer. ix. 1, 2. [8] Mark xiii. 20. [9] Rev. xxii. 12.
[1] Matt. xxiv. 12. [2] 2 Sam. xx. 9.

for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, cursed speakers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy."[3]

The philosophers can tell us that no motion violent is wont to be permanent. The rainbow, as it hath a watery colour, which may show us what hath been past; so hath it also a fiery, to signify what is to come. Satan's fierce rage may argue the shortness of his time[4]; the coldness and barrenness of the earth and trees show the qualities of aged bodies, or in effect tell us, there will come a time when we shall not have any longer the use of them. The decay of ancient families and houses, the defect of strength and stature, do make us daily see this world is wearing away. That which is the flash of lightning before the hideous clap of thunder; that which is the mustering of an host of men, before a sad battle; the same are these signs before Christ's second coming to judgment.

To be curious with the Bethshemites, in prying into God's ark, hath been the folly of some men[5]; to be calculating and scanning the day and year of that time, which is unknown unto the angels in heaven, is needless. For seasons or times, it is not for us to know: for our appearance, at that time, before Christ, to give our account, it is for all to know. That

[3] 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2. [4] Rev. xii. 12. [5] 1 Sam. vi. 19.

the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, that a general audit shall be kept, Christ Himself showeth in the parable, where the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, that will take account of his servants.[6] God will require a reckoning at our hands, of the time He hath lent us, of the graces He hath given us, of the blessings in this world bestowed upon us. When the rich man's steward, in the 16th of St. Luke's Gospel, saw how the world was likely to go with him, to wit, that he must give an account,[7] it was time for him to call his wits together; and so it is for us all, if we have any care of the account which will be required at our hands. An account for ourselves: "Adam, where art thou? How hast thou walked in the commandments I gave thee?"[8] An account for our brethren. "Cain, where is thy brother Abel[9]? how hast thou used him?" An account for our bodies: have they[1] been kept as the temples of the Holy Ghost? An account for our souls, whether be they fit to appear in the sight of the great Shepherd.[2] An account for our works[3]: an account for our words[4]: an account for our very thoughts.[5] It is most true God is merciful, but we cannot tell whether our sins will make a separa-

[6] Matt. xviii. 23. [7] Luke xvi. 2. [8] Gen. iii. 9.
[9] Gen. iv. 9. [1] 1 Cor. vi. 19. [2] 1 Pet. ii. 25.
[3] Rev. xxii. 12. [4] Matt. xii. 36. [5] Wisd. i. 9.

tion between God and us, if we be not careful in time: a consideration hereof may be the compass to guide our ship, the square to frame our building, and may evermore move us to cast in our minds how to provide for a day to come.

Now, therefore, seeing our condition of life is only certain in uncertainty, seeing our time passeth away, as the Prophet David saith, as nothing, and man disquieteth himself in vain: why do we not endeavour to attain a retired course of life, and content ourselves with our calling, be it but mean amongst men? We know assuredly after all our climbing, down we must, die we must, where or when, we know not: one falleth in his full strength, being in all ease and prosperity,[6] another in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure: both, saith Job, sleep in the dust, [and the worms shall cover them].[7] O good Lord, that men would sometimes consider this, leave the pursuit of this troublesome world, and follow Christ in meekness, who is the way, the truth, and life! without the way we walk not: without the truth we know not: without this life we live not. We follow Him in lowliness of mind: the reward of this following is rest

[6] Job xxi. 23.

[7] [Ed. 1600. "The slimey valew shall be swept over them."]

unto our souls.[8] Jacob laid the hand of blessing upon Ephraim the younger[9], and God (saith St. James) bestows the gift of grace upon Ephraim too[1], that is to say, the lowlier. The apostle St. Paul, in every epistle, where he commendeth them, to whom he wrote, to grace, he commends them jointly to peace: his usual style is Grace and Peace, as if where grace is, there peace is; as where the fire is, there heat is; wherefore that same "One thing have I desired," of the prophet, may be the "one thing have I desired" of every well-disposed man: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord[2], or serve Him peaceably all the days of my life." Noah was an hundred years together busy about an ark, to save him from the flood; we have not so long to labour in framing a peaceable and religious course of life, which will one day be an ark for the body, and a tabernacle for the soul: when we shall be safe indeed.

It is a world to see the unquiet disposition of some men's natures who are either whining at God's providence because they have not their own wills, or otherwise in bitter conflicts because they will be ever in trouble with men. Did these consider that the days of their warfare are not long, and that they

[8] Matt. xi. 29. [9] Gen. xlviii. 14. [1] Jam. iv. 6.
[2] Ps. xxvii. 4.

are towards another world, they could soon endeavour to pass over that small time of continuance yet remaining, in more quiet and contentment both with God and man.

Now when we hear that God is just, we learn to fear Him, and when we hear that He is merciful, we learn to love Him. So that with fear and love, we may go forward from virtue to virtue, until we grow unto a perfect age in Christ Jesus. Who is there that doth not desire to see good days; good days indeed, to wit, the days of all eternity, let him eschew evil and do good.[3] For the day of the Lord, that dreadful day, it is resembled to the coming of a thief in the night[4], well it may spoil and torment the careless and the reckless: but for the watchful householder, that expects the coming thereof, it shall pass along by him, and never hurt him. "The just shall stand (saith the Wise Man) with great constancy," and "they shall lift up their heads, for their redemption draweth nigh."[5] There is no better counsel to be given to the world, than the counsel of Him who came to redeem the world; watch and pray continually, that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and that ye may stand before the Son of

[3] Ps. xxxiv. 13. [4] 2 Pet. iii. 10.
[5] Wisd. v. 1. Luke xxi. 28.

man[6]; go upon his right hand, and hear that joyful voice: Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundations of the world[7]: Into which kingdom, Jesus Christ bring us all, for his infinite mercy's sake. *Amen.*

[6] Luke xxi. 36. [7] Matt. xxv. 34.

## A SHORT DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

## FAITH AND THE NATURAL MAN:

CONCERNING MAN'S ESTATE IN THE WORLD, AND HIS DEPARTURE FROM THE WORLD.

*Faith.* Is thy belief rightly grounded?

*Natural Man.* I profess the name of Christ.

*F.* Never tell me of profession. Dost thou think of no other estate, but a bare continuance in this world only?

*N.* Yes, I think of another world to come, and also of my departure from the life present.

*F.* I would to God thou didst in heart, in truth, and verity, for I fear thou dost deceive thyself.

*N.* As how? I pray you.

*F.* Because this is but a superficial conceit.

*N.* How know you that?

*F.* Marry, thy life is led in such security, as if thou mindest nothing less than the time to come.

*N.* But may I not take part in the plea-

sures of this world, and use them when they are offered?

*F.* Thou mayest for honest recreation; but use the world as if thou used it not.

*N.* I am of great birth and parentage.

*F.* True honour is not of others, but of ourselves.

*N.* But my house is ancient.

*F.* Then began it by virtue, and by virtue shouldst thou continue it.

*N.* But my progenitors have flourished.

*F.* True, but are they not gone the way of all the world? and thou also must follow.

*N.* But I am in the flower of youth.

*F.* Yet remember thy end; youth is but a flower that may soon fade.

*N.* But there is nothing more distant from the end than the beginning.

*F.* In the state of man it is not so, wherein often we begin and end together.

*N.* But I have strength.

*F.* Boast not of strength, some little touch of sickness will make thee soon stoop.

*N.* But I am healthful.

*F.* Health is a blessing, and therefore use it well.

*N.* But I live in great abundance.

*F.* Then livest thou in great care.

*N.* But I live amidst many delights.

*F.* Then livest thou amidst many temptations, and therefore take heed of them.

*N.* But I am in high place.

*F.* Then art thou in a slippery place.

*N.* But I have the government of many.

*F.* Then art thou also servant unto many.

*N.* But I have friends.

*F.* Trust not in princes, trust not in any child of man: Trust in God.

*N.* But I have riches.

*F.* If riches increase, set not thy heart upon them.

*N.* But I have honours.

*F.* Then hast thou envy also.

*N.* But I am glorious in the world.

*F.* Desire to be hid unto the world, and known unto God.

*N.* But methinks I am well.

*F.* How can that be, living, as thou livest, in a vale of tears?

*N.* But I hope for peace of mind.

*F.* Then must thou be a conqueror of thine own affections.

*N.* But I have much laid by for many years.

*F.* So said he, whose soul was suddenly taken from him.

*N.* Is our state then in this world so uncertain?

*F.* It is.

*N.* Then will I hope for the life to come.

*F.* In so doing, thou dost well.

*N.* But what shall I do in the mean space?

*F.* Love God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength: and thy neighbour as thyself.

*N.* Seeing this world is so variable, then I bid all trust in earthly vanities farewell.

*F.* Lift up thy mind to God, in Him only is thy eternal welfare.

---

*A Dialogue betwixt Discontent and Hope.*

*Discontent.* I am more miserable than any.

*Hope.* Others are miserable too; we all live in a world of misery.

*D.* But I am more miserable than any.

*H.* Leave to complain, deliverance is of God, who will not fail them that call upon Him.

*D.* I am in bondage.

*H.* Remember there will come a time of freedom.

*D.* But I am poor and helpless.

*H.* So was Lazarus, who doth rejoice in Abraham's bosom.

*D.* But I am afflicted in body.

*H.* So was Job, whom God loved.

*D.* But I am reproached in the world, and I fear infamy.

*H.* Fear God. If the reproach be true, crave mercy for thy faults at his hands: if false, let thy own conscience comfort thee.

*D.* But I have lost the time.

*H.* Indeed a great loss; but it is never too late, so that at last thou do well.

*D.* But I am destitute of friends.

*H.* God is thy friend, if thy reliance be upon Him.

*D.* But I am weary of this toilsome world.

*H.* Heaven is the haven of rest.

*D.* But I would be gone from it, I care not how.

*H.* Fie! Discontent! Suffer rather a world of torments, than be so faithless.

*D.* But I have no other remedy.

*H.* Call for grace; cast off this abject fear, with vain thoughts, away with them; hearken not to the shameful enticements of Satan.

*D.* But I am full of troubles.

*H.* So was he in the world, that is in glory.

*D.* But death is very grievous.

*H.* It is not so, but an end of grief. "In sorrow thou shalt eat thy bread, until thou turn to earth;" as if then sorrow should end.

*D.* But I am sorrowful.

*H.* Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

*D.* But I eat the bread of carefulness.

*H.* So have all the servants of God done.

*D.* But I have often called, and see no deliverance.

*H.* God will send deliverance, assure thyself, at the last.

*D.* But I have not the possessions that others have.

*H.* A competent measure of wealth to retain honest reputation in the world is sufficient.

*D.* But I wear in age.

*H.* Then doth the time of thy deliverance draw on.

*D.* But I am old and crooked.

*H.* Then make an end with the world.

*D.* But I am pained with sickness.

*H.* The health of the soul is most to be desired.

*D.* But I fear death.

*H.* Thou needest not, for it shall not hurt thee, but make thy happy entrance into life.

*D.* But I am loth to leave the world.

*H.* Why shouldst thou so be, seeing thou art going to live with Christ?

*D.* But I live not in that pleasure I see others live.

*H.* Be content: remember to whom it

was said, Son, thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy pleasure.

*D.* But I am ever under the cross.

*H.* So must all be who will follow Christ.

*D.* But grief is present.

*H.* But the reward is yet to come.

*D.* But I often want mirth in this world.

*H.* God doth humble us a little by want of worldly mirth, but blessed are they who now weep, for they shall rejoice; we think them happy that here laugh, but Christ saith, Blessed are they that mourn.

*D.* Well, Hope, seeing the case is such, and so full of comfort in times of distress, whatsoever befal me, I will put my trust in God.

*H.* Then assuredly thou shalt never fail, either in life or death, in this world or in the world to come.

---

## *A Dialogue between Presumption and Fear.*

*Presumption.* I am more holy than others.

*Fear.* So said they who were most unholy.

*P.* But I am not so profane as I see many men.

*F.* What art thou that judgest?

*P.* But may I not glory in my virtues?

*F.* Glory in God.

*P.* But I have more graces than others.

*F.* Despise no man; thou knowest what thou hast been, thou knowest not what thou shalt be.

*P.* But I have better gifts than a number besides.

*F.* Take heed, thou knowest not how long thou shalt enjoy them.

*P.* But I am sure all is safe.

*F.* So said they who counted themselves children of Abraham, and are fallen.

*P.* But I am wise.

*F.* So wert thou if thou didst not say so.

*P.* But I am happy.

*F.* St. Paul saith, Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall.

*P.* But I have many days to live.

*F.* No, thou hast no warrant for the least continuance.

*P.* But I am strong and healthy.

*F.* So have many been, and yet taken away in a moment.

*P.* Methinks I should not pass away so soon.

*F.* Why not? thou hast here no continuing city.

*P.* Well, I will make less reckoning of the world than I have done.

*F.* Then shalt thou do well, here and hereafter.

*P.* Now I see my folly, in being so confident.

*F.* Be careful, be careful: too much self-love and boldness hath undone many.

*P.* Well, I will not, from henceforth, glory in myself.

*F.* Let him that glorieth, only glory in God; and know this, that by how much the higher thou art, by so much shouldest thou be the more humble.

*P.* Now I consider my own frailty.

*F.* This consideration will make thee poor in spirit, and "blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

---

*A short Discourse, wherein is showed the great commendations of a peaceable course of life, unto which course of life we are moved by a consideration of our departure hence.*

To pass over the days of this our pilgrimage in a peaceable manner, is, and ought to be, our Christian honest care. The Holy Ghost commanding us, "to seek peace, and to ensue it."[1] It was Christ's own farewell from his disciples: "My peace I leave unto you."[2]

[1] Ps. xxxiv. 14. [2] John xiv. 27.

And one of St. Paul's last exhortations unto the Corinthians, "Brethren, be at peace, and the God of peace shall be with you."[3] Amongst other great differences whereby God's children are discerned from the children of the world, this is not the least, that they are the children of peace. Saul, that had an evil spirit, had an unquiet and troublesome spirit, but David, that had a good spirit, had a spirit of peace. Amongst the punishments of Egypt, that of the flies was not the least, which would not suffer the Egyptians to rest. In like manner, amidst this world's felicity, these cumbersome thoughts are wont much to molest the world's followers. The graces that flow from God's Spirit are resembled often unto rivers and pleasant waters. These rivers abide not on the higher mountains, but have their course through the lowest valleys. It is want of humility that makes men so far from a peaceable state and condition of life. Our Saviour Christ exhorteth us to learn of Him to be humble and meek, that so we may find rest unto our souls.[4] Was it not folly in the Israelites, to desire rather to live in the troubles of Egypt than in the land of promise, where they might have quiet, and time to do their sacrifices unto God? The same is the

[3] 2 Cor. xiii. 11. [4] Matt. xi. 29.

folly of many, who choose rather to be moiling in the world, about ambitious and contentious practices, seeking revenge and glory, rather than to retire a little to a peaceable state of life, wherein they might apply themselves to devotion. Stories make mention of Arsenius, who, of a glorious senator, became a great lover of Christ, and contemner of the world, who was also said to have, by a divine oracle, this advertisement; Arsenius, fly, be silent, and give thyself to quiet or peace.[5] The more we estrange ourselves from the love of this world, the nearer we draw to God, and if we draw near unto God, (saith St. James,) God will draw near unto us.[6] The most honourable state of life is to serve Him; all our inferior, either pleasures or profits, for a time, like some small clouds, pass to and fro, and are at last dissolved into nothing. So we have as much water as will carry the ship, or, with Jacob, food and raiment for this journey[7], let God be our God, and let his benefits bind us unto Him. An unquiet or troublesome life, is their life, who have not known the way of peace[8], and may also fear a time of trouble to come. To live religiously and peaceably before God and man, is their Christian conversation, whose prayer is

[5] Fuge, tace, et quiesce.
[6] James iv. 8.
[7] Gen. xxviii. 20, 21.
[8] Rom. iii. 17.

with the prophet, "One thing have we desired of the Lord, that we may dwell in the house of our God all the days of our lives." If Christ did call worldly men to labours, and anguish of mind, they might answer, as those in the Gospel, "Lord, have us excused[9]:" but calling them to undertake a sweet yoke, and promising rest unto their souls, peace eternal in the state of grace, and peace eternal in the state of glory, how can they but find in their hearts to come, being so lovingly called, and to pass their time in that peaceable course, which true devotion is wont to afford the well-disposed for their everlasting good? The bird, who for necessity is fain sometimes to stay[1] upon the earth, is notwithstanding for the most part soaring in the air, where she tunes many a quiet and pleasant ditty. In like manner, for necessity's sake only our cogitations are sometimes on things here beneath; but our chief delight should be higher, where is quiet and peace of conscience; where distracting thoughts, which are wont to disturb the lovers of this world, do not come near them; they are risen with Christ, and therefore seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. The devout man's life, therefore, is angelical, whose body walketh on earth, but

[9] Luke xiv. 18. [1] Ed. 1600, "Staire."

his desires (as hath been before showed) are above, in heaven. It is a wondrous case to see how apt men are to debates and quarrels at the least offences, sometimes rather taken than given: their stomachs are aloft: they swell in malice, their hearts are so big, nothing will qualify them: it is a disgrace, they think, to bear a little, or put up with the least injury: the infinite needless actions, and suits of law, which, for some vile unconscionable gain, find some fit patrons abroad in the world, do much nourish this unchristian trouble, and troublesome life of Christian men, who should affect nothing less: they follow on their course from term to term till at last the action dieth with the party.[2] They can account a lease of one and twenty years as good (in a manner) as an estate of three lives; and they see time wears out the counsellor, his client, the assurance, and all, but no amendment at all is seen. Were this well remembered, it would soon make men of another disposition, than for the most part they are: more patient, more peaceable, less contentious.[3] Is there not a wise man to judge between brethren? We have (God knows) but little time to spend in the world; what should we desire more than to spend that little well, devoutly towards God, peaceably amongst men? It was Joseph's counsel

[2] Actio moritur cum persona. [3] 1 Cor. v.

to his brethren, when they were returning to their own country, "fall not out by the way; go along together to your father's house, quietly as travellers, lovingly as brethren." Let only love of the life to come move us to serve God, and be at peace with our neighbours, that so we may turn our good purposes to good practices, our practices to custom, our custom to delight, our delight to perseverance, our perseverance to live to God, and to die to God. For the better performance hereof, we should every day more and more wear out of love with this cumbersome world. There is such a noise in the catching desire of riches, that we cannot hear the soft voice which calls us to devotion. There is such a noise in men's devices for maintenance of pride, as they cannot hear the soft voice which calls them to humility. There is such a noise in the multitude of earthly affairs, that we cannot hear the soft voice which calls us to think of heavenly. We may be compared unto those men, who, living near the river Nilus, are said to become very dull of hearing: we are so near in affection to those transitory delights, as the prophet's trumpet-like voice will scarce be heard to move us to contrition for our sins: we feel the troubles of the world, and yet for all that we make the world our paradise. We marvel at the rude and ignorant Indians, who, for glasses and trifles, are said

to part with[4] the purest gold. But we never think of our own folly, which is far greater; who forego the treasures of heaven for very baubles, things of small or no continuance; nay, which is more, with toil we follow this mean traffic, as the spider that exhausteth her bowels to make a slender web, which is dissolved again with every puff of wind: it is enough to astonish any indifferent man, to see the world's blindness in this; when men might be more at peace, they never leave climbing, until they take a fall; they look unto pleasures as they are coming to them, not as they are going from them, when they are wont to leave trouble behind.

It were to be wished that men would once withdraw themselves from unnecessary cares and desires, in seeking too vehemently the vain riches and pleasures of this world, which are so much in request as they are. In so doing, might they not pass over the days of their pilgrimage more peaceably, more religiously? They might: young men from their childhood, in fearing God; old men now departing the world, by giving good examples unto others,—all considering the state and condition of life itself, which is as but a flower. First, it buddeth; then comes the blooming and flourishing: a little after, it withereth, and is gone. Wherefore man (saith one) may be

[4] Ed. 1600, "To depart from."

well greeted with a threefold salutation. From childhood to thirty, the greeting is, You are welcome. From thirty to fifty, the greeting is, You are in a good day. From that time afterward. Then God give you a good departure. Now, therefore, gently to accomplish this journey, to pass from childhood to youth, from youth to strength, from strength to old age, from old age to death; as certain rivers which are said, by a still soft course, to run through a part of the main ocean, is a very Christian and commendable condition of life, unto which we are moved by a consideration of the uncertainty of life itself.

Unto Him that is able to direct us in this course of life, to keep us that we fall not, and to present us faultless in the life to come, in the presence of his glory with joy, that is, to God only wise, with Jesus Christ our Saviour, and the Holy Ghost, three Persons, but one eternal and everlasting God, be all honour, and glory, and power, and dominion, both now and for evermore.

*Laus Deo.*

To God be the Praise.

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Bound by
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25342 243.5 Su87

AUTHOR
Sutton, C.
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